



INDIA:  
A WARNING

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

"WILL CIVILIZATION CRASH?" (1927)

"FREEDOM OF THE SEAS." (*With Sir George Young.*) (1928)

"NEW WARS: NEW WEAPONS." (1930)

# INDIA:

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## A WARNING

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BY

LT.-COMMANDER

THE HON. J. M. KENWORTHY, R.N., M.P.



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## FOREWORD

THIS book is presented to the public by one who spent some years of service as a Naval Officer in the East, and who has recently revisited India for the purpose of studying her problems on the spot.

During a lengthy visit the writer hardly saw or spoke with a European, for weeks at a time; but had opportunities for discussion with representative Indians of every class, race, creed and caste, including many Rulers of States and most of the prominent Indian politicians who have been active in recent years.

Nevertheless, there were also consultations with Europeans of all classes and opinions from His Excellency the Viceroy downwards. Far from only one side of the case being heard, much courtesy was shown and information given by European Civil Servants, soldiers, merchants and private persons.

It is the fashion in some quarters to doubt the value of any opinions about India other than of those who have spent the better part of a lifetime in some part or other of the vast sub-continent. But this book has been written in the hope that the views and impressions of one who approached the subject of India without prejudice, but with sympathy and some experience of problems of government in many parts of the world, will be useful to the general public in Britain, who as citizens and voters have a heavy responsibility for a just solution of a difficult Imperial problem.



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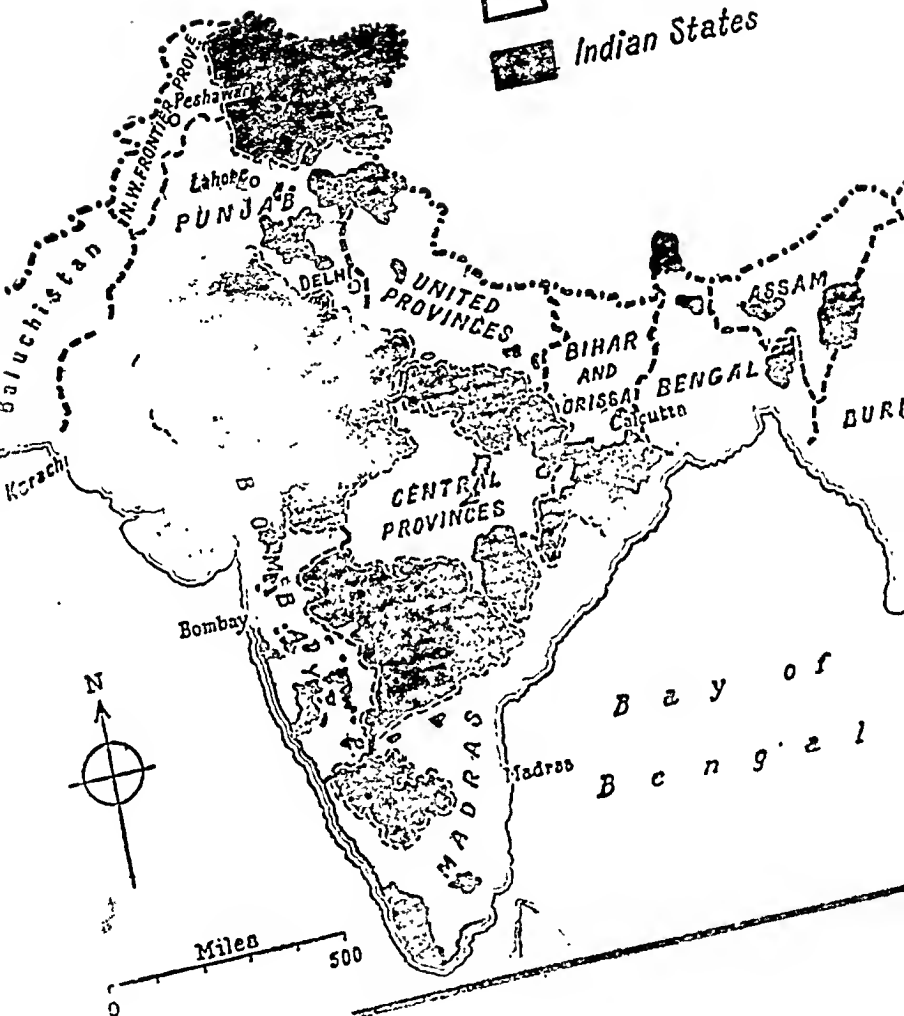
J. M. K.

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 British India  
 Indian States



## THE PROVINCES OF BRITISH INDIA

The map shows the provinces of British India. There are eight Governors' Provinces together with Burma, which was made a Governor's Province in 1923, and which, according to a decision made recently by the Round Table Conference, is likely to be again separated from British India. In addition there are a number of minor provinces directly under the control of the Central Government. The North-West Frontier Province is the most important of these. The three provinces of Madras, Bengal, and Bombay are known as Presidencies. They have Governors who are not members of the Indian Civil Service.

| Province.                         | Area<br>(in sq. miles). | Population.    | Prevailing Religion.                   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|--|
| Bombay Presidency                 | 123,000 ...             | 19,000,000 ... | Hindu                                  |
| (Sind, northern part<br>of Bombay | ... 47,000 ...          | 3,000,000 ...  | Mohammedan                             |
| Madras Presidency                 | ... 142,000 ...         | 42,000,000 ... | Hindu                                  |
| Bengal Presidency                 | ... 78,000 ...          | 47,000,000 ... | 53% Mohammedan,                        |
| United Provinces                  | ... 107,000 ...         | 45,500,000 ... | Hindu                                  |
| Punjab                            | ... 97,000 ...          | 21,000,000 ... | 50% Mohammedan,<br>30% Hindu, 12% Sikh |
| Bihar and Orissa                  | ... 83,000 ...          | 34,000,000 ... | Hindu                                  |
| Central Provinces                 | ... 100,000 ...         | 14,000,000 ... | Hindu                                  |
| Assam                             | ... 53,000 ...          | 7,500,000 ...  | 55% Hindu                              |
| Burma                             | ... 237,000 ...         | 13,000,000 ... | Buddhist                               |
| North-West Frontier<br>Province   | ... 16,000 ...          | 2,000,000 ...  | Mohammedan                             |

fraction of the members of which have even been East of Suez, is responsible for the good government and welfare of our vast Indian Empire. We send eminent gentlemen to India as Viceroys, or Governors of the three Presidencies of Bengal, Bombay and Madras, who, as likely as not, have never before set foot on Indian soil; and we appoint as Secretaries of State—and very successful some of them have been—politicians with no first-hand knowledge either of India or the East. As the criticism may be made that I was only a casual visitor to India, I would like to meet it immediately by saying that I had considerable previous knowledge of the Orient. During my professional career in the Royal Navy I served many years in the East, including a whole commission of three years on the China Station, during which time I visited India as a naval officer. Eastern travellers will agree that there are certain features common to all Asia. They are fundamental to an understanding of the Eastern mentality and they mark a wide differentiation from us in Europe in our present stage of social development.

They are, firstly, the tremendous part that religion plays in the day-to-day life of the mass of the people. Except in certain intensely Catholic countries, there is nothing to compare with it in Europe or North America.

Secondly, there is the extreme poverty and low standard of living of the mass of the people. This is being raised, very gradually, under industrialism with its new wants and even its luxuries; but, broadly speaking, over the whole of Asia the land-cultivating and working populations live in poverty. With this goes a curious contentment. The mass of these people tilling the soil in the great countries of the Orient are satisfied so long as they can meet the simple needs of themselves and their families. It was this placid contentment which so irritated that energetic and brilliant Jew, Edwin Montagu, when he spoke of the need of deliberately stirring the

Indian cultivators out of their condition of peaceful and passive contentment. One of the phenomena of the present situation in India is that Montagu's desires are being realised, at any rate in Western India. The Gujerati cultivators and millhands in the Bombay Presidency are approaching the state of political unrest of the English Chartists of fifty or sixty years ago. Also with this low standard of living goes, as a rule, little education, poor physique, and inability to resist the ravages of various diseases.

The third typical Eastern characteristic is the cohesion of family or communal life. The family, the clan, the religious sect or community, hold the first loyalties of the vast majority of Orientals. Japan is an exception here; but, broadly speaking, national conscience and national patriotism have not been understood in the East as in the West until quite recently. In passing we might note that our Western Nationalism is also of comparatively recent growth. It is not so very long ago since an Englishman's first loyalty was to his feudal chief. In some cases this was transformed into loyalty to a throne or a dynasty. European Nationalism is really, as we know it to-day, only about a hundred years old, and saw its real beginnings in the Republican, Liberal and Nationalist movements of the early and middle nineteenth century. That this same Nationalism has caused much suffering and many wars in Europe is an unfortunate fact. Modern advanced thought seeks ways of softening it, of toning it down, or even of obliterating it altogether and erecting in its place a wider patriotism of humanity. It is disheartening indeed that, while Western reformers in Europe or America are seeking to establish a wider Internationalism and the World State, Asia should be passing through the same diseased state of mind that has so afflicted Europe. Still we have to reckon with facts as they are and it is one of the mani-

festations of awakening national feeling and partly the result of alien rule and domination.

It should be remembered that our modern Imperialism is also of recent growth. We went to India, in the first place, as traders; and we first utilised Australia as a convict settlement. The New England Colonies were founded by refugees from religious persecution. Some of our West African Crown Colonies started as bases for the slave trade and continued as coaling stations for the Navy. The modern Imperial conception is only some fifty or sixty years old.

The strong family or clan cohesion will gradually disappear in India. And with its many aspects of value there go, from the political point of view, certain difficulties and disadvantages such as nepotism and communal hostility.

I deal with the communal difficulties in India in more detail later in these pages; but the above are some of the characterisations of the Orient common almost to every country and community in Asia.

There has been a great outpouring of political books and treatises in recent years dealing with India: and small wonder. For it is our greatest present Imperial problem, indeed a World problem; but few of these books refer to the character of the Indian people. On the one hand we are led to believe that they are exactly like ourselves, only need to be given a Constitution and full self-government and then will think and act like the voters in England, France or Germany. On the other hand we are told that there is something totally different in men with darker skins than our own, that "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet", and more nonsense of the kind. The fact is that the mass of the Indian people are very like what we were in the Middle Ages in Europe; though with modern means of education and communications they will pass over the

intervening centuries of mental development with far greater rapidity than we have done. My own experience of Eastern people is that they betray much the same emotions and react to much the same treatment as ourselves. A young working-man politician, who had never been out of England except to serve in France as a soldier, once gave me his opinion that all that was needed in India was to "treat them right". He really hit the nail on the head.

There is the same deep religious piety, the reverence for saints and holy men, the superstitions, if we will, that characterised the average English peasant of the Middle Ages. The homespun cloak of *Mahatma* Gandhi and the hair-shirt of Thomas à Becket have the same symbolism. Women are in the same subordinate position, though here again they are gradually winning emancipation. There are certain distinctive characteristics of Indians, however, which it is as well to note. One is their gentleness, their opposition to, and horror of, violence. These words may come as a shock to some of my readers who have mental pictures created by the headlines of the English and American popular Press of India as in a turmoil of raging mobs. There is certainly a smaller percentage of crimes of violence in India than in any other country in the world; and certainly less in comparison than in any European country. There are certain fighting races, warlike by tradition; but in nearly all Central, Western and Southern India the great mass of the people are noteworthy for their gentleness. Great communities like the Jains are opposed to taking any kind of life, human or animal. They even object to the killing of diseased or maimed cattle; and the more extreme members of the sect oppose the killing of obnoxious insects! Scores of millions of people in India are entirely vegetarian and seem to have a hereditary aversion to meat-eating. There is some drinking of

alcoholic liquors, imported and native, in the sub-continent, and especially amongst the more primitive races, and I can quite understand *Mahatma* Gandhi's horror of strong drink, living, as he does, in the neighbourhood of the great mill centre of Ahmedabad. Toddy-drinking and the consumption of certain strong native wines was in existence long before the first Englishman set foot on the Indian shore. But with industrialism has come undoubtedly an increase of toddy-drinking amongst the poorer classes and there is considerable consumption of spirits amongst the well-to-do. There is also an unfortunate increase in the traffic in the most pernicious drugs, cocaine and heroin, far worse in their effects than opium, the use of which has very greatly increased. Drink has been the curse of the European communities in Asia, and, I am sorry to say, especially the British communities, for three or four generations. It is still a curse in India, though I am glad to say a diminishing one. The more sober habits of the stay-at-home Englishman are certainly reflected in his wandering brother and sister overseas. The improvement in the sobriety of the Army in India is extraordinary.

With the gentleness of character I speak of is kindness to and love of children, and hospitality and courtesy to strangers. The average Indian farmer is a fine fellow, industrious, sober and pious; and, if usually illiterate, of a high order of intelligence. His fault, if fault it is, is over-conservatism and reluctance to adopt new methods of cultivation; but here again lack of working capital is often the cause of slowness to adopt improvements.

Indians, generally speaking, are extremely sensitive and emotional, and it is important for this to be understood because of what follows.

I have referred above to the European communities, which, for all practical purposes, means the British. Their

total numbers, about 160,000,<sup>1</sup> are no guide to their importance politically from the British point of view, and very naturally. The fraction of British members of the Indian Civil Service does not of itself convey the fact of their occupation of most of the key positions. The Army is almost entirely commanded and staffed by British officers and the police are controlled by Englishmen, Scotsmen and Irishmen.

I deal at some length later with the highly important and, hitherto, far too much neglected question of the Army in India. It is one of the most serious difficulties facing us, and yet one which must be solved if there is to be peace in the future in our great Indian Empire. In commerce the British, and particularly the Scots, still predominate. Shipping, insurance, banking, manufacture, are almost entirely controlled by Europeans. And this despite the increase in the Indian capital in the mill industry, the successful establishment of Indian shipping lines, and the increase in the influence of Indian-owned banks.

There are three distinct strata of Europeans: first the civilians, by which I mean the Indian Civil Service, the White Brahmins—as they are called—with the forestry, medical, irrigation, public works and other services; secondly, the military; and third, the commercial classes. The last two are nearly all concentrated in certain centres. The British commercial residents are mostly found in the great cities and seaports; the military, naturally, are concentrated in their own cantonments and garrisons.

There is not much mixing between the three sections, and, to speak quite plainly, a tremendous amount of snobbery both amongst themselves and, still more, with regard to the peoples amongst whom they dwell. This is not to say that there is not much friendship between

<sup>1</sup> 1921 Census gives 156,637 Europeans, of whom 45,000 are women



British and Indian soldiers and British and Indian business men. In Bengal, for example, the Marwari business men "hit it off" extremely well with our own merchants, and many Englishmen are happy in the employ of Parsee and Hindu capitalists. Indian and British soldiers naturally have much in common: and the missionaries, who might be described as a fourth section, really do live saintly lives in the midst of the people and carry out in practice the teachings of the Christian Faith.

For some decades Government has endeavoured, as part of a deliberate policy, to break down the social barriers between the transitory European population and the Indians. The very word "native" is officially forbidden. But the barriers remain, and they have been erected by hands on both sides of these barriers. Yet the first real attempts to remove these barriers should come from our side. It is not by any means entirely the fault of the Europeans that they have not made better social contacts with the people among whom they live. But we must recognise that there is something in the present-day British mental make-up that keeps us apart from any but our own kith and kin. It is not only in India that this phenomenon persists. Observe the English circle in the South of France or even in Switzerland, and their aloofness from the rest of the inhabitants or visitors. To me it is a miracle how certain types of Europeans can live all their lives in India and remain in their little circle of the tiffin-table, the club and the mail steamer out and home. I can best illustrate this type by relating my very pleasant encounter with a charming, elderly Scotswoman I had the good fortune to take in to dinner one night. She hailed from a part of Scotland where I have family connections, and I naturally found much in common with my partner immediately. She had spent her whole life in India since her

youthful marriage, broken only by spells of leave. Most of it had been spent in one Province. She had never even learned to speak any of the languages of India, though she could give simple household orders to her servants in the vernacular. She was one of a tiny community whose total membership one could count on the fingers of both hands, in a small and remote Indian town. The number of Indian gentlemen in the district who spoke good English was about the same as the Europeans. This good soul, kindly, sympathetic, a fine example of her type, was cut off, therefore, from any intellectual companionship with the Indian ladies of the district, and practically all the men. She was quite content; and there are thousands of English and Scottish women like her scattered over our Indian Empire.

Far worse than the type of this gentle soul is the ill-mannered Englishwoman, a few of whom are scattered about the vast Indian Peninsula—arrogant, vulgar, prejudiced, wounding and hurting the people among whom they dwell by their coarseness and discourtesy, and undoing the fine work and example of those brave, noble ladies of our race who I am glad to think still predominate.

There are certain conventional ideas about India and her inhabitants, most of which are wrong and out of date. The ordinary stay-at-home Englishman visualises India as a land full of snakes and always torridly hot. It can be extremely cold in India, especially in the North in winter, and though a considerable number of people die from snake-bite every year it is possible to spend many years in the country without seeing a reptile of the snake tribe at all. On a par with these superstitions about India is the one that all the resident Europeans are extreme die-hards and opposed to any political advance by the native-born inhabitants.

This is about as true as the idea of the snakes. There are die-hards in India, but the bulk of the Europeans

who have spent many years in the country are by no means averse to constitutional advances. In fact it is true that the European communities are, as a whole, much in advance of conventional British opinion at home in this respect. By conventional British opinion I mean that of certain retired Governors, senior Civil Servants and high military officers who do not realise the immense changes that have taken place, socially and economically, in India, and the altered political outlook not only of the educated classes but even of the country people and working-men whom the Politicians have been able to influence.

## CHAPTER II

### INDIA'S DESIRES AND BRITAIN'S OPPORTUNITY

IF I were asked to sum up in a sentence what really is the desire of the politically conscious people in India, whose number is increasing rapidly every year and almost every month, I would say it is for equality of status. If they are to remain within the Empire they must be treated as equal citizens within the Empire, both in India and abroad. This is a mental state becoming common all over the East, and not by any means confined to India. We find it in Persia, Indo-China, China itself, and, of course, Japan. The Asiatic will no longer acknowledge the general superiority of the Westerner.

The troubles in India, in their modern form, are, I believe, traceable to the events of the Russo-Japanese War at the beginning of this century. For then an Asiatic nation, herself only a few years removed from mediævalism and feudalism, met in war and overthrew a first-class European Power. The events of the Great War, and the doctrine of self-determination especially, which spread through the East like a prairie fire, hastened this process of mental development. In any case the Indian peoples are, generally speaking, very sensitive, and to them *Izzet*, or self-respect, is of paramount importance.

Now, it is a fact, which we may as well recognise, that we British, and the English in particular, are not "good mixers". We have a very strong sense of "colour" and race; and before the present chapters of world history are written we shall pay dearly for this national characteristic. By far the greatest of our troubles in India,

indeed, is social. Deliberate and conscious efforts have now for some decades been made by Government to try and break down this attitude on our part. But I am not sure that it is not too late. And this sort of thing happens repeatedly to this day. An Indian official of the Civil Service, a collector, for example, is appointed to a district where there is a very small community of Europeans and other officials, and he is at once invited to become a member of the local club. He may not use the club very much, but he and his European colleagues are perfectly satisfied. Then he is moved to a larger district on promotion where there is a bigger community, able to sustain its own club, and in many cases he is not invited to membership.

I am told that one of the things which helped to alienate the younger Nehru, the Pundit Jawahirlal—very sensitive, highly educated, much Anglicised—was the refusal of membership of one of the leading clubs in Delhi. In London he had been well received on his merits, which are very high: and in India the social standing and character of his father should naturally have assured him an equal welcome in European circles. This story may or may not be true: but it is perfectly true that similar instances, multiplied by scores of thousands, have bitten deep into the educated Indian conscience.

Thus, Sir Pertab Singh, Maharaja of Indar, a Major-General of the British Army, who had served with great distinction in several campaigns and was one of the finest soldiers India has ever produced, could not be taken into the Yacht Club at Bombay. The newest joined British subaltern or midshipman is admitted as a matter of course. This trouble is not confined to India, as every observant traveller knows.

I do not expect it will be any comfort to my Indian friends, but this complaint of "superiority complex" and aloofness is made against the English by Canadians,

Australians, and even our own Welsh, Scots and Irish. The assumption that we are "God's chosen people" is apt to be irritating. When translated into aloofness, the formation of cliques, and, worst of all, downright snob-bishness, it may become unbearable.

In my early sailing days we had the same difficulty in Malta. The Union Club, occupying one of the old palaces of the Order of the Knights of Malta, is nominally for naval and military officers, and all senior English civilian officials are admitted as a matter of course. But no Maltese gentleman could be made a member of the Club or even allowed across the threshold, even those holding the King's Commission in the Regular Army, including members of the Maltese nobility! These things may sound trifles; but in the case of Malta, when I was serving in the Mediterranean Fleet, so much dissatisfaction was caused by yet another of these incidents that the Governor, the Admiral, and the General in command of the troops put their heads together and made a great effort to influence the members of the Club to admit Maltese officers of the Army, who were only a handful in any case, and very likable fellows at that. We had a general meeting of the members to alter the rules; and there was an immediate revolt. The majority of the British officers declared that if this rule were carried they would resign from the Club and form one of their own from which they would again exclude the "dagoes", and the Admiral, the General, and the Governor bowed to the storm.

This social question is one of the most difficult we have to contend with. I am told it has become worse in the last sixty or seventy years. In the old Company days in India the English sahibs had great prestige, but they were cut off by a three months' sailing-ship voyage from Europe, communications were scanty and their numbers few. They had to make friends with their native-born social equals.

The modern English public-school system is blamed, but I think unfairly. It is not a class question, but a matter of race. I must relate two incidents that came under my personal observation in India. I was going over that wonderful old Mogul Fort and Palace at Delhi, and just behind me, with another guide, was a small and extremely well-behaved family party of Indians, probably of the well-to-do merchant class from a distant Province, seeing this wonderful relic of a Mogul dynasty, just as I was. Presently, pedalling a bicycle, appeared a rosy-faced, pleasant-looking young corporal, wearing the uniform of a famous British regiment. He thought one of the Indian ladies was in his way, and he cursed and swore at her horribly. The Indian party shrank away but took the insult with stoical disregard and perfect breeding; the corporal pedalled off, in appalling ignorance of the enormity of his offence. He never would have behaved like that in Edinburgh, or Portsmouth, and if he had he would probably have been horsewhipped.

But in India it seemed natural enough to him, or he would not have done it. He may not have been unkind, he was the typical decent-looking young Englishman temporarily in uniform; but, as Bernard Shaw puts into the mouth of the Maid in "St. Joan", once a people tries to rule over another in a foreign land it becomes overbearingly arrogant and discourteous.

The other incident happened at a small port where I was boarding a coasting steamer for a short voyage. An Englishman whom I knew slightly, who had spent all his adult life in India, and who appeared to be a man of a kindly and generous disposition also, was unintentionally jostled by an Indian porter laden with luggage. He kicked him savagely, cursing the while. He could not have done this in England, or he would have got a black eye for his pains, and would have been lucky to avoid being summoned; while if he attempted such an

outrage in present-day Japan, the Japanese porter would probably do him a serious injury, and he would certainly be arrested by the Japanese police and lodged in jail. But the Indian porter had no redress; though in theory the Englishman could have been summoned for assault.

One more example which I know to be true. An Englishman of the same type was undertaking a night journey by railway train, some years ago, and found an Indian gentleman asleep in the carriage he wished to occupy. Awakening him roughly he told him he must clear out. To his surprise the Indian answered with a string of oaths in the accents of Oxford, and threatened to set about the Englishman. "Oh, I beg your pardon," said the Englishman, "please remain where you are. I am delighted to meet you. I didn't know you were a gentleman."

The French, who are responsible for the greatest Empire in the world second to our own, manage these things differently. There is practically no colour bar in France, and during the War we used to see French officers, white and coloured, mixing in complete amity and fraternity. In Morocco I have seen and heard Parisian women in a train talking with complete freedom and cordiality with Moorish ladies about dress, servants, and the usual topics of feminine conversation. Coloured Senators sit in the Palais Bourbon and officers of negro race have risen to high rank in the French Army and Navy.

Our French neighbours make no pretence of believing in democratic institutions in their Colonies; but they seem to get on better with the native populations. Certainly the French people never understood the perfectly genuine outcry in Germany, England, and America against the use of negro troops in the Army of Occupation on the Rhine. Yet the French Empire, as an Empire, may last longer than the British.



The foundations of *Mahatma* Gandhi's popularity were laid by his partially successful efforts for better treatment of Indians in South Africa. The reflection of this feeling of inequality of status is to be seen in the present Congress demand for the right to secede during the negotiations that were expected to lead up to its participation in the Round Table Conference. Everyone knows well that if a Dominion like Canada or Australia decided by a large majority to secede from the Empire we neither would nor could prevent it. But if we refuse the same right to secede to India, while talking loudly of Dominion status, to Indian minds we put a stamp of inferiority on the whole of India's peoples.

I believe the risk of secession to be very slight. The Indian States, one-third of the area of India, or nearly half India proper, with their 72,000,000 inhabitants would be in opposition, and very important elements in British India would resist also. Many Constitutional lawyers hold that the virtual right of secession of the Dominions resulted from the 1926 Imperial Conference. To refuse it to India, and it could only be in theory for many years to come, is once more to assert, as our Churchills and Brentfords are so fond of doing, that we conquered India by the sword, and intend to hold her by the sword. For one country to hold another by the sword means the right of its corporals to swear at the local inhabitants.

The incidents of bad manners I have mentioned are, of course, isolated. But enough happen to have a cumulative effect. The great majority of the Europeans in India, of all classes and sections, are well behaved. But it is *possible* for the thoughtless or the ill-natured to misbehave; and this is only because we are in India as an Army of Occupation, governing to the best of our ability but nevertheless representing an alien power dominating subject peoples.

The next most serious difficulty in India is the general mistrust of the Indian people by the English, and of the English people by the Indians. I do not here refer to personal mistrust, which, after all, depends on the individual. There are many friendships, business, social and political, between Englishmen and Indians. But Indian politicians, and their number is increasing, have got into a habit of mistrusting Government promises whether emanating from Whitehall or Delhi, and I fear that far too many Englishmen in authority both in India and England mistrust the Indian people. Yet in the great Mutiny the people of India, as a whole, helped the Government, and the Princes saved the situation.

These symptoms of distrust are unpleasant facts, but it is no use burking them. Many Indians of great influence declare that we do not keep, have not kept, and will not keep our promises to them. I fear they do not always realise that different Governments and different men have different ideas in England, that public opinion in itself is changeable, and that British Governments cannot move far in advance of public opinion. We have meant to make the Reforms a success, and I believe that the great majority of British Civil Servants in India have honestly tried to do their best to work them. At the same time many of the older men in the Indian Civil Service and in the India Office were doubtful of their efficacy. On our side, again, we have shown active distrust of all Indians by our attitude with regard to the Army, to which I refer later. What is the use of our talking of Dominion status and the "full stature of nationhood" in the British Commonwealth for India while at the same time obstructing the Indianisation of the Army? If we cannot trust the peoples of India to have the control of their own armed forces we should say so honestly. Any democratic advance, in a vast sub-continent situated as is India, is a question of balancing risks. In the meantime

we are getting the worst of both worlds. Most informed observers will agree that the risk of helping India to develop her own democratic institutions is far less than that of reaction and attempting to impede her progress towards nationhood by force and repression.

I believe that the best opinion in India, British and Indian, agrees to-day that the British Raj will survive the present troubles, but will not weather the next storm. It will be noticed that these agitations in India—and they are becoming more serious—recur at intervals of about ten years. By the middle of 1931 most of the present non-cooperative effort and civil disobedience may have expended itself. The trade boycott will probably continue, though it is causing such havoc to Indians themselves that it also may disappear. But in 1939 or 1940 the movement will become active again and get so out of hand as to resemble a great tidal wave sweeping all before it and leaving chaos and wreckage in its train.

The greatest disaster that could befall India would be for the attempt to rule by the sword to be continued and for the sword to break in our hands. The present-day conditions of China would be repeated on almost as great a scale.

The historian of the future will probably declare that our great original mistake in India was in not governing more through Indians. Our dominion in India will not last nearly so long as the Mogul Empire. Why was it that an invading army of aliens from Northern Asia, who soon became assimilated, were able to maintain their Empire almost unchallenged for nearly three hundred years? They had no great Imperial power behind them, they could not draw on reserves of men and money from outside, they were only a handful compared to the rest of the population.

The answer to the riddle is to be found in the policy

laid down by Baber, the grandfather of the great Akbar, and the first of the real Mogul Emperors to consolidate the Imperial power. He left the care of his dynasty to his son Humayun, whose beautiful tomb is so well-known a landmark near Delhi. Baber's written instructions on his death bed are well worth the attention of all students of the Indian problem. In a few words, the gist of them was that to preserve the Mogul ascendancy in India it was necessary to govern through Indians. No distinction in appointments was to be made between Mohammedans and Hindus and any other community. Some of the Mogul Government's most successful Governors, Viceroys and Generals were Hindus. The Imperial Army was frequently commanded by a Hindu soldier. Under the Moguls, a Hindu Minister of Finance, an ancestor of the present Maharaja of Jaipur, organised the fiscal and taxation systems of India, taken over by the East India Company, and the basis of the system in force to-day throughout most of the Peninsula.

We have adopted much the same system as the Moguls in Nigeria. Penetrating into the interior of Western Africa in the days of our Imperial expansion we found a fairly well organised system of native government exercised by the Mohammedan chiefs. We have kept all the best features of it and we still govern in Nigeria through the native chiefs, notables, gentry and aristocracy. The system works very well and a mere handful of Englishmen, acting more as inspectors and advisers than as an Executive, control this huge region, some of whose inhabitants are turbulent and only recently brought into touch with Western civilisation. Perhaps it may be said that it is late in the day to attempt to adopt the best features of the Mogul Imperial rule; but we could do something by appointing Indians as Governors of Provinces in British India. A precedent exists in the case of Lord Sinha, Governor of Behar and Orissa,

though I believe he was ailing and past his best powers when he was appointed.

There are many able and enlightened Indian rulers, the descendants of men who held governorships under the Moguls, who would be admirable for the purposes; and plenty of very eminent Indian politicians who would be successful governors. And why not create a few Indian peers every year? There has only been one—Lord Sinha—but two or three eminent Indians sent to reinforce the House of Lords in London would, I believe, pull more than their weight in our debates on Eastern affairs and show India that, at any rate in the House of Lords, her sons were there to voice her aspirations.

The French have their Senators from the Colonies. It is part of the French system of treating all subjects of the Republic as Frenchmen. The trouble with ourselves is that although, in theory, we treat all subjects as citizens of the Empire we don't look upon them as Englishmen or teach them so to regard themselves.

Another great historical example was the Roman Empire. "*Civis romanus sum*," said Paul the Jew, with pride and confidence. "I am a Roman citizen," said the Prophet. Could an Indian gentleman—barred from South Africa, Canada and Australia—boast of equal citizenship in an Empire that claims to enjoy more liberty and to be more democratic than the Imperium of the Cæsars?

Much of what I have written about the underlying causes of the trouble in British India applies also to the Indian States. I devote certain chapters to this vital question in this book, and deal in more detail with the problems of the Indian States. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the events of 1930 has been that while there have occurred very regrettable disturbances in British India and a really serious threat to the stability

of government, combined with a ruinous trade and social boycott, especially in the West, there has been almost complete tranquillity in the States. There were some sporadic disturbances and demonstrations in certain States which were soon suppressed. They were not directed against the Indian Rulers, but in sympathy with what was happening in British India.

A certain section of Indian politicians, and they have a few English friends, have been continually girding against the States, accusing the Rulers of every crime in the calendar, and pretending that the subjects are groaning under pressure of exploitation and only prevented from revolting by the British Armies. As I point out later, I do not find this view shared by the most responsible Indian opinion, and the events of 1930 would certainly tend to show that it is much exaggerated, if not nonsensical. We adopt a pose in England of regarding the monarchical system somewhat lightly, except in our own country. There is practically no Republicanism in England, and we have successfully solved the supposed difficulty of reconciling extreme democracy with constitutional monarchy. But we are apt to look upon the rest of the world as Republican in reality. The monarchical sentiment is stronger in Asia than in Europe. Indeed it is far stronger in America than many people might suppose. The Indian Rulers are of the people, understand them, and, especially with regard to the Rajputs, have religious sanction behind them in a Continent where religion still plays a tremendous part in the day-to-day lives and thoughts of the people. If we should decide that we are better out of India and withdraw, or, as *Mahatma* Gandhi said to me, "leave in a huff", or, as certain British business men in India have suggested, "leave them to stew in their own juice", it would not be British India that would absorb and conquer the States, but, far more probable, the States would conquer

and dominate the Peninsula. There are, of course, misfits amongst the Rulers as there are in all countries; and the Order of Princes acknowledges that a handful of the Princes do not govern well. But the present generation of Indian rulers, Rajput, Maratha, Sikh and Mohammedan alike, are known to be honestly desirous of advancing the interests of their people, and perfectly well aware of the necessity and desirability of adopting Constitutionalism by stages as soon as their subjects are ready for each step.

Of the loyalty of the Rulers and their leading subjects to the King-Emperor there is no doubt, and their desire to "play the game" with the British Empire is equally certain. But they have suffered from the same mistrust referred to above. To put it quite plainly, they have been badly treated in the past, and are by no means safe from a barely disguised tyranny at present. It was a deliberate policy to keep the States divided, weak and economically backward, only to be justified by a distrust of their attitude towards the British Raj if they become powerful wealthy and united. With the setting up of the Chamber of Princes under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and the other Constitutional changes that have been made in their relations with the Imperial power, that painful chapter should have been closed.

But this has not happened.

The Butler Committee laid down an extraordinary doctrine, which has not been repudiated as yet by the British Government. It is that while the Treaties and Sanads taken over from the East India Company by the British Government and reaffirmed again and again in solemn Imperial and Royal Proclamations are sacred and sacrosanct, inviolate and inviolable, the Paramount Power shall have the right of altering or modifying them as desired. This is a ridiculous assumption in the twentieth century. A bargain is a bargain, whether it is made

between two rich and powerful men or between a great man and a little man. So with nations and peoples. It is an intolerable idea that justice and equity shall be overridden by force simply because the Paramount Power is in a position to coerce the States.

All decent Englishmen hate injustice; while questionable conduct by a guardian in his dealing with his ward, is looked upon with special loathing.

Our relations with certain of the Indian States in the past have led to both these crimes. For example, the States had, many of them by Treaty, the right to mint their own currency and to manage their own railways, posts and telegraphs. It may have been better from the point of view of efficiency to unite the posts, telegraphs and railway services, but why was this done in so many cases during minorities, when the States were under a Regency, the Regent appointed by the Government of British India, and the opportunity seized to take over these services? As for the minting of money, it was no doubt inconvenient to have a number of separate currencies; but why again was the right of minting nearly always taken away during minorities, and, in several cases, without any sort of compensation for the loss of the profits of minting?

It looks very much as if the Paramount Power took advantage of this temporary guardianship of the State to do acts which, though advantageous to British India, were definitely injurious to the Ruler and his subjects. Several of the major States, notably Cutch and Hyderabad, still mint their own money; and I have not heard of anyone being the worse in consequence.

In any case these actions of Paramountcy should surely have been done by negotiations during majorities and nothing whatever done during minorities which might be represented as taking advantage of the temporary and fortuitous position.



And now, while the future of India is in the melting-pot, we have invited the Indian Rulers to send their representatives to confer at the Round Table Conference on equal terms with the British Government and with the representatives of British India.

Unless this doctrine of Paramountcy is repudiated, what can be the value in the eyes of the Indian Rulers and their subjects of any agreements come to with the British Government and British India? How can we expect the States to come into an Indian Federation, as the Simon Commission suggested, a United States of Hindustan, as they themselves have offered to do, unless their Constitutional position is secured? However, the Chamber of Princes has produced good statesmen, the members of its Standing Committee are experienced men of affairs who have taken part with distinction in Peace Conferences, Imperial Conferences and League of Nations Assemblies and they are advised by first-rate Constitutional lawyers, British and Indian. Their policy disclosed at the Round Table Conference has been admirable. I do not myself see them walking into any trap. They are almost our only sure friends at the moment in India. They possess the only organised armed forces not altogether under British control, and they have settled systems of government certainly suited to the people, which, in many cases, have lasted for centuries.

Economically the position of the States is difficult. I refer to this later; but, briefly, the position is that with the adoption of Protection by British India the peoples in the States are being taxed indirectly for the benefit of manufacturers in British India with no corresponding advantage to themselves.

But the most unsatisfactory feature is that in case of any dispute with the Government of India the latter is the judge in its own case. Successive Viceroy—

particularly the distinguished nobleman who holds the office at this time of writing—are never tired of impressing on the Rulers the need of a more rapid advance towards Constitutionalism, and, in particular, the necessity of providing a Judiciary separated from the Executive. But at Delhi or Simla the Executive and the Judiciary are one, The Political Department, the portfolio of which is held by the Viceroy, the recruitment of which and the conditions of service have, I am glad to say, been constructively criticised by the Butler Commission, is all-powerful. If an injustice is committed in British India the vernacular Press can be trusted to blazon the facts to the world, but the numerous acts of tyranny committed against the States and their Rulers are hidden from the light of day and the fierce glare of newspaper criticism.

It is admitted that the Paramount Power should have the right of intervention in the case of flagrant misrule and gross injustice or of extravagance in the Durbar amounting to misrule. They have the right of intervention in such a case, and this right is upheld by the Order of Princes as a whole; indeed it is a safeguard for the Princes themselves and their system of government. But the interference otherwise, such as hindering the improvement of communications, railway building, and other development, to which I refer later, are simply indefensible. Not only are they a relic of the old policy of keeping the States economically dependent and poor for military reasons, but there is no sort of appeal to any higher authority.

A coolie in British India can, in the last resort, take his grievances to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of the Empire; and this is frequently done. But the Rulers have no appeal except to the King-Emperor, which means the Viceroy in Council, which, in practice, again means the Political Department.

One of the most immediate and pressing necessities in

India is for an independent Court of Appeal entirely separate from the Executive, on the lines of the Supreme Court in the United States of America which can adjudicate in a dispute between the States and British India, or, under Federalism, between the Provinces themselves. The President of this Court should be an eminent Jurist with no previous Indian connection. I should prefer a Canadian or Australian judge.

The workings of the Political Department should, in my opinion, be subject to an impartial and competent enquiry, not by ex-members of that service or even by members of the Indian Civil Service, but by unbiased men of eminence and independent judgment. The autocracy of the Political Department in India is almost as great as the powers of the Star Chamber. In any case, its recruitment, conditions of service, etc., are in need of a thorough overhaul.

A general overhaul of the Political Department is recommended in the Butler Committee's Report, and this portion has received general assent. It is somewhat peculiar that no steps have yet been taken in this direction. We hear a lot of the "new spirit" at the India Office since the change of Government from Conservative to Labour; but it has not yet manifested itself in Whitehall and Delhi's policy towards either the Political Department or the Army question.

I am afraid it is a fact that we have to deal with some inveterate enemies in British India. There is a frankly revolutionary element, looked upon I daresay with sympathy by Moscow; but the seeds of the present trouble were sown long before the Czar was overthrown in Russia. There is no more reason to say that Russian influence is responsible for Terrorist acts in India than to have blamed the late Mr. Gladstone for the uprising in the Balkans against the Turks, with which, it will be remembered, he and most of the British public sympath-

ised. There will be irreconcilables whatever settlement is reached. But I, for one, would feel easier about the future if we showed half the anxiety to satisfy the legitimate demands of our friends that we have to placate the implacable, and, indeed, in some cases to truckle to our avowed enemies. For we have friends in India; and not least amongst them are the Ruling Princes, their Ministers, and the great majority of their subjects.

The blunder made by some British politicians is to look upon India as a second Ireland. Perhaps the mistake is natural to men whose early impressionable years were spent in the turmoil of pre-war domestic politics when the Irish question was predominant. The conditions are utterly different. I refer to this matter in some detail later, but suffice it to say now that the Irish are practically a homogeneous race, while the Anglo-Irish have been so assimilated as to outdo those of native descent in their fervid patriotism. In India there is a conglomeration of races, creeds, castes, the best and most complete summary of which, and it has not, so far as I know, been challenged, is to be found in Part I. of the Simon Commission's Report.

But there is another great difference. In Ireland we were able to hand over power in the end to a strong Party able to keep order in its turn. In every successful revolution there has been such a national group or party with the necessary will power and cohesion to keep order. This is just what is lacking in India, as was admitted to me sorrowfully by many great political figures whose names are household words all over the world. An Indian Central Government with full powers, but relying for its sanctions on foreign troops or even on soldiers recruited from a limited section of the varied races in the Peninsula, cannot be of the standing of a self-governing Dominion. In the following pages I deal with some of the aspects of the whole of this great problem.

I will now state very briefly the core of the problem as I see it. India is a vast country of great potential wealth, both material and spiritual. The primary need of her peoples is for better education and more of it, and it must be of the right type. With better methods of agriculture, more irrigation, improved transport, the scientific exploitation of the mineral and other natural wealth of the country, India's economic possibilities are almost unlimited. Think of the market if the standard of living of the Indian masses could be raised to that of even the European working-classes! But political agitations and boycotts are a terrible hindrance; while the high cost of maintaining the Army, organised on the present system, uses up half the revenues available for the Central Government. For India to play her part in the world again, especially commercially, the energies and genius of her sons and daughters must be diverted into constructive activities.

What should now be done? I suggest that a firm declaration should be made by the British people agreeing to full Dominion self-government for India with certain safeguards (of which presently) and after a fixed interval of time.

The latter depends on the time it will take, with good will and energy, to create an Indianised army strong enough to maintain internal order and to guard the frontier under ordinary circumstances, that is to prevent raids by the clansmen. In the possible future event of invasion by a foreign Power, Afghanistan or Russia, Imperial assistance would be forthcoming, just as it would be if there was a threat to India from overseas. Ten, twelve, fifteen years, whatever the interval necessary; and after that responsible self-government on a federal system with proper safeguards for the constitutional position of the Indian States and the rights and liberties of the minorities. The States can be trusted to

make democratic progress as soon as their peoples are prepared for it. As for the safeguards, we can trust the minorities concerned to put forward their demands, and it is for the Hindu majority to satisfy them in advance. These minorities, the Mohammedans, Sikhs, Parsees, Christians, and Europeans, have every right to look for fair treatment in regard to their religious and civil liberties; and British capital in India has the right to be treated on an equality with Indian capital. The 1930/31 Round Table Conference provided a Heaven-sent opportunity to do this.

A shock has been delivered by the loose talk of repudiation of India's debts, and the desire for an examination of the various past loans by an impartial tribunal. I myself believe that in order to satisfy Indian opinion, and for the sake of our own conscience, an impartial tribunal *should* be invited to examine into the loan question. I do not believe we have anything to be ashamed of; and as for repudiation, the whole question of debt and interest is agitating many countries besides India. I should think from what I know of Indian business men that they themselves would be as jealous of India's credit as the people of any other country.

The position is by no means hopeless. We shall, I believe, weather the present storm. It is highly desirable that India should be kept out of the arena of party politics in England. This may not be possible, and it may become necessary to make India a great national question. Above all, we must avoid the policy of wobble. There has been far too much "backing and filling," with differing policies between Whitehall and Simla, and different aims, according to the speeches and writings of political chiefs and senior public servants. Even without the adherence of the Congress leaders, it is a good thing that the Round Table Conference was held. It presented a great opportunity. If this opportunity is lost

through timidity, weakness, or "woolliness," it may not recur, and the next outbreak in India will probably mean a cataclysm. A tremendous responsibility rests on the voters of Britain and those they elect to Parliament. I am sure the average man or woman in England wants what is right to be done in India, but is hampered by the lack of knowledge of that vast and fascinating country.

It is with a view to giving such information as I possess about a very difficult Imperial question that this book is presented to the public.

## CHAPTER III

### WHY A SOLUTION IS URGENT

THAT the Indian problem would loom large in British politics had long been obvious. By the beginning of 1930 India had become the most urgent question in Imperial politics.

The Reforms of 1919 had been only partially successful; while the appointment of the Simon Commission with no Indian membership only aggravated the situation. Unbiased observers could see great events taking shape in the East. The boycott of the Simon Commission, the hostility of the Rulers and subjects of the Indian States to the findings of the Butler Committee, the growth of the Youth Movement in British India and the returning influence of *Mahatma* Gandhi were all signs showing the approach of a crisis in Asia.

Few Members of Parliament on the Government side of the House of Commons had any recent and first-hand information about India. And events have marched with giant's strides.

I felt it might be desirable to take advantage of a comparatively quiet period in British politics to study some of the problems of India on the spot. The mail-aeroplane service from Athens via Cairo to Karachi has shortened the time of the journey, and I was able to pay a fairly extended visit and to see most of the people and many of the things in India that I desired to see.

Before my recent tour, I had visited India nearly a quarter of a century ago, but only as a young Naval Officer, calling for a few days at certain ports; and her



seaports are not India. Indeed, neither are her large cities, with their considerable European populations and their very noticeable effects of contact with the West.

The first thing to understand about the Indian problem is that it is not to be solved in the few large cities, where the intelligentsia forgather, but in her 750,000 villages. The vast majority of the Indian people live in villages, of which there are 500,000 in British India, and 250,000 in the Indian self-governing States. This, alone, will give some idea of the vastness of the problem.

Though I shall try to avoid statistics and figures, it is necessary to give a few to make the position perfectly clear. Here we have a vast sub-continent, the size of Europe minus present-day Russia, that is the old Europe less Russia, but plus Poland, Finland and the Baltic States. Europe, described in these terms, covers an area of 1,911,000 square miles. India, with Burma, covers 1,819,000 square miles. The European population, less present-day Russia, is 314,000,000. The population of India is 318,400,000. Interspersed in this population are approximately 4,750,000 Christians, of whom more than half are Roman Catholics.

The self-governing Indian States are, approximately, one-third of the total area and contain 72,000,000 inhabitants, or more than the whole of the white population of the British Empire. Every few hundred miles, as in Europe, the vernacular language of the people changes, and also their race, and in many cases their religion. Yet the races and religions are much interspersed.

Finally, on the most generous estimate, not more than 10 per cent. of this population can read and write.\* It will be seen, from the above figures, taken from official statistics, that we have here an Empire of huge pro-

\* The percentage of literacy in British India, as given in the Interim Report, is 7'2.

portions, a vast, teeming population, one-fifth of the world's peoples, for whom a comparatively small number of intelligent, educated and racially conscious Indian politicians, lawyers, professional men generally, and merchants claim to speak. How far can they speak for their fellow-countrymen? How far is the unrest amongst the small proportion of industrialised Indians, of whom we can speak as Indian Labour, due to the ordinary demands of working people for economic improvement; how far is it Nationalist? I never pose as an expert on India—though I assisted the 1919 Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms in the last India Act through Parliament, and I have tried to keep abreast of events. But there are many who *do* claim to speak as experts in Parliament, and among them can be found the most diverse opinions. Even in my own Party to-day, responsible at the time of writing for the Imperial Government of the Empire, are to be found opposing views; and there is a great clash of opinion amongst those Conservative and Liberal politicians who have made a close and personal study of Indian conditions. I have talked to scores of Indian gentlemen, politicians, business men, nobles, students and Ruling Princes—and though I find a general recognition of certain facts, here again there is great diversity of opinion.

Where does the truth lie?

I think I have said enough to give ample reasons for my visit; and though in seven weeks in the country I could only touch the fringe of the problem, I hope I acquired something of the Indian atmosphere, saw something of the vast country districts of India and especially the self-governing States, learnt something of the position of the Christians, and gathered some facts about the economic position and also the outlook of Indian Labour.

Ten per cent. of the population is engaged in industrial occupations, all the remainder being directly or indirectly connected with agriculture. Of this industrial-

ised 10 per cent., only one-tenth, or 1 per cent. of the whole population, earn their livings in organised mills, factories, mines or in shipping or on the railways. Yet this small fraction can be very important. We have seen in Russia, another great agricultural country, with a vast illiterate population, how the comparatively small fraction of factory and mine-workers have played a great part in the political life of Russia, including two revolutions, during the last twenty-five years.

It may be said, why is Britain so concerned with the future of India? Why not "clear out" of India and let her work out her own destiny? In the first place, we have been responsible for the government of India for more than a century. His Majesty the King is Emperor of India and we have a duty to its people. Secondly, the Indian market is of immense importance to British industry and shipping. I must here trouble my readers with a few more figures. India occupies the sixth place amongst the trading countries of the world. Thanks largely to the work done in recent years by Sir Basil Blackett, the late finance member of the Governor-General's Council, and continued by Sir George Schuster, the present member, the internal and external credit of India are good despite the war with its expenditure and upheavals, and the present unrest. She imports every year £84,000,000 worth of manufactured goods, and the British share of these imports represents  $11\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of our total exports to the world. Of the British exports to India 60 per cent. are what may be described as bazaar goods, that is textiles, implements, household utensils of all kinds, and the ordinary cheap wares that the Indians themselves, with their low average incomes, can afford to buy. Thirty per cent. are heavy goods, that is machinery, locomotives and engineering products generally, the remaining 10 per cent. being miscellaneous, mostly for the use of the wealthier classes and of the European

residents. The above figures were accurate before the boycott movement. They would be less now and the adverse effect of the boycott increases.

If the purchasing power of the Indian people could be increased, India's imports would be increased, we should surely manage to maintain our relative position in the Indian market, and the effect on our trade would be of the greatest importance.

The boycott of British trade has been embarked on with considerable energy in many of the Provinces. It has been accompanied by a good deal of tyranny and intimidation. Under the circumstances it is surprising that it has not had more actual effect. Nevertheless, the losses, both to Britain and India, have been heavy and there have been many innocent sufferers in both countries. It is one more reason making a statesmanlike solution necessary and urgent.

Lastly, the problem is urgent because there is a real danger of far graver disorders, amounting even to civil war, over large areas of the Peninsula, if all reasonable attempts at a settlement fail for the time being. I do not desire to appear as an alarmist; but the movement, so far, has been comparatively peaceful as the result of the deliberate preaching of non-violence by the Congress leaders and particularly by *Mahatma* Gandhi. A campaign of assassination, train-wrecking, arson and violence generally, would be a terrible tragedy. And no man could circumscribe its extent. I believe that with statesmanship on both sides this hideous *débâcle* can be avoided. But there is no time to lose.

## CHAPTER IV

### SOME REALITIES

WHEN I landed at Karachi, after flying from Cairo, I found the town had been modernised almost out of recognition during the last twenty years. There is a splendid harbour, fine public buildings, broad streets, electric light everywhere, the inhabitants mostly Mohammedan with a Hindu minority, but with strong Protestant and Roman Catholic communities, and particularly fine Protestant and Catholic churches. The Indian Catholics in Karachi include many Goanese, descendants of the converts of the former Portuguese overlords. Compared to the non-Christian population they are well educated and better off economically.

I was very hospitably received in Karachi by representatives of the Indian merchants and artisans, and European acquaintances and friends. The first thing I found in the port is that it is passing through a period of trade depression, with a good deal of unemployment amongst the working people in consequence. This magnificent modern port, which used to be one of the busiest marts in India, was half empty.

The reason is simple. Karachi was one of the chief ports for the grain trade from India. Immense quantities of Indian wheat were brought in from the hinterland and shipped to the world's markets. To-day the Indian wheat cannot compete with the Australian crop, despite the far higher wages in Australia and the greater distances. This is because the Australian farmer uses modern methods of cultivation, motor-tractors, deep



On the other hand the younger sons of the Indian farmers have been going to the cities in increasing numbers to work in the mills and factories, where they receive wages which, though low by European standards, are higher than they could earn in the villages. But the cost of living in the cities is higher than in the villages, despite terrible housing and sanitary conditions, and now there is depression in the local manufacturing industry and much unemployment among the mill-hands.

The machine-produced goods from Indian cities, again, have put the native artisans and the village industries out of business. Mr. Gandhi had a plausible case in his endeavours to revive village industries. His theory was that it was better for the village communities to make their own requirements and be self-supporting, as they were in the past. Unfortunately his proposed method of doing this included the boycott of all modern goods, both imported and those manufactured by machinery in the big cities. His boycott was equally directed against Indian city goods. And this in its turn led to disorder and rioting. The moral I would draw is that India's difficulties, economic and political alike, will not be solved by short cuts.

India is going through her Industrial Revolution. It is taking much the same form as the Industrial Revolution in Britain in the earlier decades of last century: except that in India the process is even more rapid and, consequently, disturbing to Indian social life. Women and children labour in unsuitable conditions: long hours, low wages and vile housing conditions are the accompaniments of the "industrialisation" of India. And they are being imposed on a poor, illiterate, backward people by their own richer fellow-countrymen. For the majority of mill-owners now are Indians and, by universal consent, they are no better as employers than the Euro-

peasants. Yet these Indian mill-owners and mine-owners are among the strongest backers of the Indian Nationalist movement. There is a "Labour Movement" growing up, though slowly, and the Trades Unions are becoming stronger. But the industrial population is so small, relatively, and the workmen so poor and ignorant, that the political power and economic power alike in the cities is held by an oligarchy of Indian capitalists and their lawyer allies with only the existing Government, under British control, to temper the harshness of this Industrial Revolution.

It was not surprising, therefore, to hear a great Indian Prince declaring that his people were happy in their villages and that he would resist to the uttermost the introduction of cotton mills and factories into his territories.

One more side-light on the political situation. A great political Congress met at Lahore in the Punjab, the Sikh country, at Christmas 1929, and was the beginning of the present phase of the troubles. Thousands of Indian politicians gathered there from all parts of the great Peninsula. The Extremists among them "captured" the Congress and demanded nothing short of complete self-government and independence immediately, to be brought about by "civil disobedience", the refusal to pay taxes, and, indeed, a Revolution. Lahore was like an armed camp, for the British Government had drafted extra soldiers and police into the city. This was not to prevent violence on the part of the politicians but because the Sikhs have a grievance against the Congress and threatened to prevent it being held. A "Whip" had been sent round to the Sikh villages and it was reported that 20,000 Sikh peasants with eleven elephants and five hundred horses were ready to march on Lahore to disperse the Congress! Fortunately there were plenty of British soldiers and British-controlled police available and the fiery Sikhs had to find a more peaceable way of



expressing their grievances against the Hindu politicians. But these threats should not be overlooked by those Indians and British alike who demand the immediate evacuation of India by the British.

That such evacuation, as demanded, would mean anarchy and bloodshed, was admitted to me by representatives of the younger school of Indian "Left Wing" politicians. These younger men and women say they are willing to face the suffering and confusion that would result, in the hope of ultimate success. And if an overwhelming majority of the Indian peoples and communities were of the same mind we would probably accede to their wishes. But there is at present little sign of any such majority. In the meantime we have a duty to our fellow-countrymen in India, to the Indian Christian communities, to the great minorities and to the teeming millions of poverty-stricken and illiterate cultivators and workers. And our duty is to keep the peace and to assist India to move, as rapidly but as steadily as possible, towards the goal of ordered self-government within the British Commonwealth of Nations.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CHRISTIANS IN INDIA

WHAT of the position of the Christians in India?

There are no accurate statistics existing for the number of Christians in India, as many do not care, for various reasons, to declare their faith; in any case the present census figures are nine years old and a new census is due. Also, such statistics as are kept are more accurate in British India than in the Indian States. But the Christians number at least 3,000,000, of whom the majority are Roman Catholics. The actual percentage of Catholics is really higher because among the non-Catholics are the fleeting and temporary population represented by non-Catholic soldiers of the British Army and non-Catholic merchants, business men, European officials and their wives and families. Seventy-five per cent. of the Christians in India are pure-blooded natives. Among the remainder must be numbered the vast majority of the 250,000 Eurasians, or, as they are called nowadays, Anglo-Indians.

The Christian population divides itself into various sections and groups. Beginning with the oldest there are the Thomas Christians, also called Gregorian or Syrian. Tradition has it that St. Thomas the Apostle came to India, made many converts to Christianity, and that then the connection with Rome was lost. There is nothing impossible about this tradition, for there was even then regular communication from India by sea across the Indian Ocean to Arabia, where the ancient overland trade routes connected with the ships. But owing to

wars and commotions, touch was lost between these Thomas Christians and Europe and Asia Minor for many centuries. They are very proud of their ancient faith and tenacious in their beliefs; and are principally found in the great southern native State of Travancore. In the past they suffered persecution and disabilities, but now are under no kind of discrimination. For Travancore is a model Indian State and its regime extremely enlightened.

The Thomas Christians are in communion with the Anglican Church. There is another ancient sect of Nestorian Christians converted by missionaries from Asia Minor and then, third in antiquity and most important in numbers and influence, are the great Roman Catholic communities, most numerous in the South and in the Bombay districts, the descendants of Indians converted by the Portuguese overlords. The Portuguese Empire in India, once so strong on the Malabar Coast and in Bombay, is now represented by the small ancient Colony of Goa, and a few more small territories. The Goanese, so-called, have a strain of Portuguese blood in them in many cases, and are nearly all Catholics.

The Catholic Christians are well educated, and fairly prosperous. The Goanese are found all over India as skilled craftsmen, musicians and, above all, as men-servants in the wealthier households. They serve in the British Navy in East Indian waters as stewards and mess-men, and as stewards, cooks, etc., in the coastal steamers and also in some of the sea-going steamship lines, notably the "P. & O." and "British India".

We then come to the more recent converts made by European missionaries professing various creeds, of whom again the Catholics are more numerous, though there are many Presbyterians and Anglicans. It is a mistake to suppose, as is sometimes stated by the ignorant, that these more recent converts are mostly from the

poorer classes of the community. Many wealthy and cultured natives of India—born Parsces, Mohammedans or Hindus—have embraced Christianity.

With regard to the Eurasian or Anglo-Indian community mentioned above, their position is interesting and is becoming difficult. Of a certain English education and proud of their strain of European blood, they have fulfilled, and still fulfil to-day, an important rôle in the life of India. They are clerks, station-masters, postal officials, engine-drivers, electricians, shop-assistants and the like.

India is on the brink of important political changes. One section of the Anglo-Indians wishes at all costs to retain their European affinities, another section feels that its best course is to throw in its lot with its Indian fellow-subjects and particularly to support the Dominion Status programme as opposed to the demand of the majority of the Congress for Independence. Indeed, the Association of Indian Christians, including both Anglo-Indians and native Indians, have come out boldly in condemnation of the "Independence" Resolution of Congress and in support of the Moderate programme of Dominion Status. There are again two sections of opinion amongst Indian politicians. One is unfriendly to the Anglo-Indians, the other claims them as fellow-subjects of India and is not hostile. But it is generally true to say that the Christians of all sections in India are exercised as to their future. And it is not difficult to discern the reasons. The dominating force in Indian life is Hinduism. For long there has been hostility between the Hindus and Mohammedans. Far-sighted Indians are doing all they can to get rid of this hostility; but, if they are succeeding, progress is slow. The Hindus did not proselytise until recently; indeed the theory was that one was born a Hindu and could not become a Hindu otherwise. The Mohammedans, however, some 70,000,000

number as against 220,000,000 Hindus—are an active proselytising force. Claiming communal representation and therefore a proportionate allocation of offices and the like they have been seeking to add to their numbers with more vigour than ever. A section of Hindus has been attempting to retaliate and has succeeded in re-converting some of its own people from Mohammedanism to Hinduism. All this has led to a good deal of bitterness and even disorder, especially in British India. With the resulting accentuation of religious difficulties between these two dominant creeds, the Christians in India feel that they may fare badly in the future if the British hold is relaxed; and they fear this particularly in British India. In the Independent States by general agreement there is far less communal feeling between Mohammedans and Hindus, and this is used as an argument by Indian politicians to show that under Swaraj or Home Rule communal difficulties will disappear. The real reason in the States, I am told, is that there is the strong hand of the Rulers who will not tolerate communal disturbances, at the same time allocating offices fairly.

From my enquiries I am convinced that the Christians have nothing to fear in the Indian self-governing States. I found no complaints from the Christians in any of the States that I visited. Where they are numerous enough they have their own churches and their own priests and receive a subsidy, together with the congregations of the Hindu temples and Mohammedan mosques, from the State funds. As stated above, in Travancore, the Thomas Christians are treated on an equal footing with all other States subjects, and a Christian has held office as Prime Minister. In British India, however, they fear that while they may not be persecuted on religious grounds, all preferment and employment will be given to Hindus under Swaraj.

Economically the Indian *native* Christians can survive

and prosper. They live as cultivators, workmen, business men, according to their station of life and in the Indian style. Indeed, they enjoy economic advantages, especially as farmers, because of their Christianity. Thus certain large sects of Hindus will not eat potatoes, onions and other root vegetables, and others will not keep or eat poultry. The cow, being sacred, selective breeding of cattle and selection of calves is difficult and scientific stock-raising almost impossible. None of these taboos or inhibitions hampers the Christian Indian farmer.

The Anglo-Indian Christians, on the other hand, have made great efforts to live in the European style. This means greater cost and the need for higher remuneration. This has been recognised by the present regime in India; and Anglo-Indians have had their share of positions carrying with them a suitable salary for their style of living which, though modest, is yet above the Indian style. They have a real fear that they will be gradually squeezed out economically by this recognition of their special economic needs being withdrawn. It will be difficult to devise economic safeguards in their case. Probably the most practicable will be for the present special educational grants for their schools to be continued by agreement. If the Eurasian Anglo-Indians can continue to educate their children to a fairly high standard, the future generations should hold their own fairly well.

Amongst the other problems facing those who draw up a future Constitution for India will be the finding of suitable means of safeguarding the rights of the comparatively small Christian minority.

## CHAPTER VI

### PREJUDICES AND OBSESSIONS

I REFERRED in another chapter to hopeful signs in the communal problem of India. There is a strong growing movement amongst the younger generation, especially the students, to abolish the communal differences and rivalries not only between Moslems and Hindus but between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. In the Indian Trades Unions, which are still rather primitive and rudimentary, there are no communal differences, and this is one of the most hopeful things I found in India. The working men in these Unions are combined together for the legitimate object of improving their conditions, and I suppose nowhere in the world are labour conditions more appalling in factories and mines than in our Indian Empire; and communal differences have been refreshingly absent in the Unions. In the country districts Moslems and Hindus live together, on the whole, fairly amicably. The communal violence and rioting in 1930 was confined to the towns, with one or two insignificant exceptions. In the Indian self-governing States, great and small, there is, in almost every case, practically no communal feeling between Hindus and Moslems. This is because the Rulers have a tradition of not favouring one community against the other and because they will not tolerate rioting between the communities. And it is quite easy to see why. There are Hindu States like Hyderabad, bigger than France, with a population of 12,000,000, where the Mohammedan Ruler and his co-religionists are in a small minority. There are Hindu-

governed Mohammedan States like Kashmir, where the Ruler and his Hindu co-religionists are again in a minority. It would be fatal to any sort of government in the States if communal differences were tolerated; this the Maharajas and Nawabs understand very well and so far they have managed to avoid trouble.

I have dwelt at some length on this communal problem which is not only religious, because it must be grasped if the picture of the Indian situation is to be seen as a whole.

Now as to the other features. The Congress, about which my readers will have heard so much, represents only a section of the population of India. This does not mean that its importance must be under rated. Yet it had at the beginning of 1930 a total membership of 500,000, in a population of over 320,000,000. Every member pays a minimum subscription of fourpence a year. It is overwhelmingly Hindu, the Moslems were withdrawing from its activities more and more, and are still holding aloof as regards the great majority, except in Bombay, and it is almost entirely middle-class. There is growing unrest amongst the masses of the people, the workers and cultivators, but this unrest is as much economic as political. The poverty of the people, which is admitted—though there is a good deal of exaggeration about it, at any rate in the country districts—is being exploited for political purposes. If they can have Swaraj, so the poor people are told, their lot will be better; and, naturally, they listen. There has been unrest for some time amongst the working men, while the bad factory conditions can hardly be exaggerated. But this unrest again is chiefly economic. All the "awakened" elements are at present combined in hostility to British rule. And with educated and otherwise tolerant men and women in India this hostility has become an obsession. We are being blamed for every ill from which India suffers, despite the fact



that some of them existed before we arrived in the country. Then we are told we ought to have removed these ills. But some of them are due to religious and social practices and it has been our determined policy, with the acquiescence of the Indians themselves, not to intervene or interfere in religious or allied matters.

So great is this obsession, and it is rapidly becoming pure Anglophobia against us, and so taken up are the educated classes with politics that the only thing in the opinion of all but the most reactionary in India is that self-government should be extended as rapidly and widely as possible. Give Indians the chance of dealing with their own problems and facing up to their own difficulties as they themselves desire, and let us wish them well.

I have written in a previous chapter of the position of our 5,000,000 fellow-Christians in India, and that position must, of course, be adequately safeguarded, as must legitimate British commercial interests. The terrible lack of education is one of the most acute of the problems; for only a small percentage of the available children in British India are going to school to-day, and the vast majority of the people are totally illiterate and altogether ignorant of affairs outside their own villages and fields. But finance is the great difficulty here, and the Government of India and its defence under the present system is admittedly expensive. It is difficult to economise under a British Raj, and it would be even more difficult to impose increased taxation. Everyone would have preferred education to come before democracy, but it will have to be the other way round now. One of the great problems is the Army. A certain section of the Congress Party believes that it can have self-government with British troops and British-commanded Indian troops at its disposal for defence and police purposes. This, of course, is absurd, except during the transition period. There is a Nationalist awakening in India, and Indians

of all races, creeds and castes are beginning to think of themselves as one people. But until they can defend themselves and prevent the communities from engaging in civil strife, it is mere playing with words to talk either of full Dominion self-government, democracy or national independence.

This problem of the Army and Defence will be dealt with in greater detail later.

All political parties in Britain, on the other hand, are committed to help India as far and as fast as possible on the road to full Dominion self-government, and we are in honour bound, therefore, to proceed with the Indianisation of the Army and the creation of an Indian Air Force. The Navy does not matter so much, for Indians have every right to look to the League of Nations to guard them at any rate against invasion from overseas; and the British Navy, even if India was completely independent, would be the League of Nations instrument in these waters. But the League cannot prevent the Northern Mohammedans rising and calling to the wild mountaineers on the frontier to assist them in a Holy War. The League of Nations cannot prevent serious communal strife developing into civil war in Bengal or the Punjab. One of the most disappointing things I have found in India is the lack of a real attempt to Indianise the forces. It is being done far too slowly. India does not require an Army fit to meet a first-class European Power or to fight Japan; but there are plenty of soldiers in India, and officers could be trained if the task were tackled in earnest. British military opinion is, of course, against it. But this professional military opinion will have to give way to political requirements. In the meantime the sooner the responsibility for maintaining law and order is placed on Indian shoulders the better. To-day the dangers are communal. To-morrow they will be economic.

The workmen and cultivators will, I hope, be able to improve their lot by Constitutional methods, but they will be tempted into other courses just as the Left Wing of the Congress has tried to tempt the Nationalist movement into violent methods to-day. Anything the British do to keep order in the country to-day will be misrepresented or misunderstood. Therefore, I repeat, let the responsibility be put upon Indians, and let us hope for the sake of this great country and its peoples, and, indeed, for the peace of the world, that they will prove worthy of them.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SIMON REPORT AND THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

As regards the political position in England, *vis-à-vis* the Indian problem, the Simon Commission's Report had a profound effect. What effect it will have on Indian political opinion generally and in the long run is another matter. The out-of-hand repudiation of the Report in India may not be the last word. Moderate Indian opinion was more or less committed in advance against the Report. This was because of the tactless way in which the Commission was appointed. This is no reflection on Sir John Simon and his distinguished colleagues. The initial blunder, as was pointed out at the time, was the failure to include any Indian members. And all efforts to repair the damage of this blow to Indian *amour propre* failed. But when the Report was published another blunder was made in failing to have it properly presented to the Indian masses. It should have been broadcast by every possible means, including its translation into the principal Indian languages. But certain influences at Westminster seemed determined to belittle the Report from the beginning. It is not perfect, and I shall point out some of its imperfections; but no harm and possibly good would have been done by allowing the Indian peoples themselves to know what was really in it. "Small minds and great Empires go ill together."

At Westminster it upset a good many calculations. For one thing the Report was unanimous. When it is

considered that the Chairman was a distinguished Liberal, of Radical tendencies, who resigned during the War rather than accept conscription, and that the personnel included Conservatives generally considered of the Right, as Colonel Lane-Fox and Lord Burnham, as well as two Labour members, both of whom enjoy a high reputation in the councils of the Party, the mere fact of its unanimity was impressive.

Secondly, the range and scope of the three volumes (including the Report of the Indian Provincial Committees) made a considerable impression, particularly on members of the Labour Party. Owing to the circumstances under which the Commission was appointed when the late Earl of Birkenhead was Secretary for India and the boycott it suffered from important political elements in India itself referred to above, there was a tendency to discount in advance any Report that was produced; in fact it was frequently stated during the months whilst the Report was in preparation that the recommendations if not the facts would be out of date before it appeared. This was broadly true, not only of the Simon Report but of the Government of India's dispatch commenting upon it. Events have moved fast, and opinion has developed rapidly.

But Volume I, which the Commissioners were wise enough to publish a fortnight in advance of Volume II, presented, in easily readable form, a picture, a survey of the Indian scene, the like of which has never been available before for the British public and particularly for Members of Parliament of both Houses. About the facts in Volume I there is no controversy; about the conclusions there were bound to be differences of opinion.

In the past, politicians and the public alike have been deluged with books and works on India, from Government Blue Books and Official Returns to impressionist

writings by visiting lady journalists. There have been almost numberless writers of volumes of propaganda from retired Civil Servants, some of whom might be said to represent the extreme Right, to Indian Swarajists, Home Rulers, and advocates of Independence, the latter on the extreme Left.

Part I, however, makes use, for the first time, of *all* the official information available, which is analysed, sifted, and the required deductions drawn, fortified by the personal recommendations and information of the Commissioners themselves on the spot. This picture, which is not unsympathetically drawn, but has, nevertheless, perhaps inevitably, offended large sections of Indian opinion, presents for the first time for those who will trouble to read it, the hopes and doubts, the encouragements and obstacles that must assail all who would seek objectively to find a solution of this greatest of Imperial problems.

Provided our aims in India are successful and the road indicated in Part II is followed by the Indian democracies, we shall have achieved the greatest feat ever attempted by an Imperial power. We are deliberately seeking to make possible the handing over of a vast Empire, inhabited by one-fifth of the human race, to a Government responsible to the peoples in the Indian Peninsula themselves. And how great that feat will be if it succeeds can only be appreciated by a careful study of this historical State document. The Report indicated the road. The Round Table Conference met to consider the means of marching along it.

I will endeavour to indicate, in broad outline, some of the difficulties in the way of imposing Western democracy on these Eastern peoples. For that is what we are endeavouring to do and that is the goal that we have set ourselves to achieve. To indicate the full implications I cannot do better than quote again the preamble to the

Government of India Act of 1919, the Act which implemented the proposals known as the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms:

- “Whereas it is the declared policy of Parliament to provide for the increasing association of Indians in every branch of Indian Administration, and for the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in British India as an integral part of the empire;
- “And whereas progress in giving effect to this policy can only be achieved by successive stages, and it is expedient that substantial steps in this direction should now be taken;
- “And whereas the time and manner of each advance can be determined only by Parliament, upon whom responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples;
- “And whereas the action of Parliament in such matters must be guided by the cooperation received from those on whom new opportunities of service will be conferred, and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility;
- “And whereas concurrently with the gradual development of self-governing institutions in the Provinces of India it is expedient to give to those Provinces in provincial matters the largest measure of independence of the Government of India, which is compatible with the due discharge by the latter of its own responsibilities. . . . .”

The above envisages a gradual process of evolution. But Asiatic Nationalism has advanced with giant's strides. As regards India, much of the present ferment of

Nationalism can be traced back to the tremendous events of the Russo-Japanese War at the beginning of this century. This ferment has affected the intelligentia; not only the Hindus, but the Mohammedans, Sikhs, Parsees, and other communities. It is also true that this feeling of Nationalism has begun to spread outwards to the villages and downwards into the illiterate classes, despite the unfortunate fact that millions are living on the border-line of starvation. But it is also true that with these stirrings of Nationalism have come grave communal differences, especially those between the two predominating communities of Moslems and Hindus.

India is a sub-continent as large as Europe, without present-day Russia, with twelve principal languages, not to mention two hundred and twenty-two distinct vernaculars and seven principal religions, in a region of the world where religion plays an immense part in the daily life of the people. There are 220,000,000 Hindus and about 70,000,000 Moslems; but the Sikhs number 3,250,000, the Buddhists 11,500,000, the Christians 5,000,000 and the Parsees—important because of their wealth, education and social position—100,000. There are nearly 10,000,000 who profess other religions, some of them primitive, indigenous peoples, worshipping idols and almost in the Stone Age in the scale of civilisation.

The above facts alone show that we have here a region inhabited by peoples at different stages of development, professing wide diversities of faith, and speaking nearly as many different languages as the inhabitants of the Continent of Europe. But whereas on the Continent of Europe nearly all profess, in theory at any rate, the Christian faith, in India three other great religions, Hindu, Moslem and Buddhist, are largely represented.

Furthermore, in Europe the racial differences are less than amongst the different races, or religious commu-



nities, inhabiting the Indian sub-continent. There are plenty of mixed marriages in Europe between Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox, etc. There is no trouble about race in European intermarriage. A Scandinavian can marry a citizen of Spain, a Russian can marry a Frenchwoman and so on, and there is no kind of difficulty. But in India not only is there practically no intermarriage between members of different religions but there is also practically no intermarriage between members of different castes.

There is no caste system amongst the Moslems; but Hinduism is riddled with caste, and the barriers between the different castes are almost as high as ever they have been. In the only serious attempt made to draw up a census of the different castes the list numbered no less than 2,300. The caste problem is most acute where it concerns the depressed classes, 60,000,000 in number, whose disabilities—social, economic and even religious—are only being slowly removed.

Like the Simon Commissioners, I do not mention these difficulties to gloat over them. But they have been too lightly brushed aside both by certain politicians in India and in England in the past. Indeed, the Left Wing of Indian politicians, including *Mahatma* Gandhi himself, I found fully conscious of these troubles, but taking the line in their arguments that the best way to overcome these difficulties would be to put the responsibility on Indians themselves by the immediate grant of *Swaraj*.

The communal differences in India present perhaps the most serious problem of all. It is a fact, admitted to me personally, and regretted, by such great leaders as Gandhi and Malaviya on the Hindu side, and Jinnah and Ansari on the Moslem side, that, if anything, the communal differences have become worse in recent years.

The 70,000,000 Moslems are not only separated from their Hindu fellow-subjects by deep religious differences,

but also by social and mental gulfs. Speaking generally the Hindus are richer, better educated and three times as numerous. The Moslems are descendants of, or have affinities with, the former conquerors and rulers of large parts of India. At the present time they profess to fear a Hindu Raj. The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of ten years ago have, unfortunately, accentuated the rivalries between these two great communities. The Moslems fear that in an Indian democracy they will be swamped and squeezed out by the Hindus; and they have an acute apprehension that their cherished religious customs will be interfered with. In the last resort, and this was freely acknowledged by leading Indian statesmen in *both camps*, the Moslems will fight rather than submit.

Some Hindus fear pan-Islamism—a junction of the Northern Moslems of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province with their co-religionists in Baluchistan, Persia, Afghanistan and beyond. It is in the North that the bulk of the Moslems are found outside Bengal. And this fear is genuinely held in some responsible quarters and played a considerable part behind the scenes at the Round Table Conference.

Now the importance of this fact of the intense communal hostility in India is that it makes the working of democracy in the European sense extraordinarily difficult. The Western system of elected governments rests on majority rule. When a minority is defeated at the polls it acquiesces in rule by the majority. This is the very basis and foundation of democratic self-government. It is more convenient to count votes than to break heads. But in India, for the reasons I have indicated, the Moslems are not prepared for the present to submit to ordinary majority rule.

The next obstacle to full and immediate self-government, and it is foolish to ignore these difficulties, is the

illiteracy and poverty of the vast mass of the people. The figures of literates, that is in their own vernaculars, is, amongst the males of school age and over, 4.4 in British India per hundred, and amongst the females of school age and over, only 2 per hundred.

Illiteracy does not necessarily mean lack of intelligence; but when it is combined with extreme poverty it undoubtedly presents a real obstacle to the successful working of democratic institutions.

It is no use our skating over these facts. They have to be taken into consideration if the problem is to be appreciated as a whole and if the way to reform is to be traced.

Next, there is the problem of the Indian Native States. Leaving out Burma, they cover nearly half the area of India and are inhabited by 72,000,000 people. During the period of Imperial expansion in India the territories of the Indian rulers were left intact for a variety of reasons. One of these was that they were the more inaccessible portions of the sub-continent, furthest from the sea, or containing the poorest soil. Economically, therefore, they are backward and in the past they had been kept backward as part of a deliberate, and only slowly abandoned, policy. British India for commercial reasons did not desire to see the States developed; while for political reasons it was felt to be safest to keep them poor and undeveloped.

Except in certain cases, where they had been industrialised, or are near industrialised regions of British India, the political development of the Indian States is far behind that of British India. I deal with this vitally important question of the States in subsequent pages. The Indian States are bound to the Crown by Treaty. But these Treaties contain reciprocal obligations. It will not be just or equitable to impose on the Indian States any change in the relations between themselves and the Crown of which they do not approve. At the same time

the rulers and their subjects have become increasingly conscious in recent years of their common interests with British India. Since British India obtained fiscal autonomy, Customs duties have substantially increased, resulting in a heavy indirect taxation of the subjects of the States in which they enjoy no share and in the imposition of which they have no voice. Questions of currency, railways, posts, telegraphs and the like, profoundly affect them. They now demand, quite naturally, a voice in these matters. Here some system of Federalism is obviously desirable, and the proposals of Part II of the Report clearly outline a future United States of India with a Federal system of Government, an all-India Council and a Supreme Court. The Federal system was one of the first proposals accepted in principle at the Round Table Conference.

There are other aspects of the wide problems of Indian reform; but I will only refer to one more, though it is of supreme importance. It is the question of Defence, both external and internal. The most backward service in India is the Army, in so far as regards fitness for self-government. The Army, both British and British-Indian, is highly efficient. But it is almost completely officered and completely controlled by the British. Indianisation of the Civil Service has far outstripped Indianisation of the Army; while the acceleration of the pace of recruiting suitable young Indian gentlemen to be the holders of His Majesty's Commission is slight. The India Office itself appears to be helpless here *vis-à-vis* the War Office. The military hierarchy in India is so well dug-in, so professionally jealous and proud, that it has hitherto been able to defy all real efforts both by Whitehall and Delhi to hasten Indianisation of the military forces. Take one instance, the Staff. No single Indian officer has been permitted to take the S course either at Camberley or Quetta. Nor h

attempt been made to establish an *Indian Staff College*. The result is that no Indian officer has qualified in this vitally important service! The pitiful excuse put forward by the India Office through the mouth of Mr. Benn, the present Secretary of State, is that no Indian officer has attained the requisite seniority to sit for the Staff College entrance examinations. This, of course, is a quibble, and a feeble one at that. Nor have more than one or two Indians been trained for the Artillery and Engineers. A few officers are being sent to Sandhurst, but, owing to the expense and the difficulty of passing the examinations in a language not their own, the choice is very limited. At the present rate Indianisation of the Army will take at least two generations.

I shall deal in greater detail with this vitally important subject later. But the fact remains that, outside the Indian self-governing, semi-independent States there is practically no Indian Officer Corps for the Army. There are plenty of private soldiers and non-commissioned officers. But without more trained Indian officers the creation of an efficient Indian Army will be extremely difficult. Yet how can India enjoy the status of a Dominion nation without her own means of defence, at any rate on land?

In the meantime, however, I found a good spirit among the senior British Officers with regard to their duty in backing up Indian Ministers in future in the maintenance of internal peace. Indeed, the more senior the officers the more liberal-minded I found them in this respect. They are quite content to envisage Provincial Autonomy with British-officered troops "keeping the ring" and suppressing communal disorders, etc. I consider the portions of the Simon Commission's Report dealing with the Army the weakest in the two volumes. It is said that they were written by the distinguished British member of the Indian Civil Service who was

formerly Military Secretary in the Central Government. But how the Commission came to accept them is a mystery. While on the question of the Army, and coming now to the actual proposals, it is good to see that the late Marquess Curzon has at last been justified. The Commander-in-Chief, it is suggested, should no longer be a member of the Viceroy's Council. This was an anachronism. His place will be taken by a civilian Minister. This proposal is more important than seemed to have been generally appreciated by commentators on the Report and should be read in conjunction with what I have said on Defence.

Nervousness has been expressed about the proposal to make Indian Ministers in the Provinces responsible for the police and good order. There has already been some experience here to go by.

The Indian Ministers in the native States, some of them of great size and importance (several are larger than the United Kingdom), have maintained internal tranquility very successfully on the whole. They have control of their own police and armed forces, and Indians themselves have been responsible for law and order for generations. What has happened in those States, it is believed with some confidence, will happen in the areas to which autonomy is extended. While in India I discussed this very question with scores of representative British officials, senior officers in the Army, and leading Indian politicians.

I found the feeling among the Europeans, singular though it might sound to some here, very sympathetic to the Indians themselves becoming responsible for the maintenance of order through the police. Indeed, the general feeling among civilians and military, to whom I listened in many parts of India, was that they would be only too glad to support Indian Ministers in putting down communal strife and preventing violence. This is a part

of self-government, and they must be allowed to tackle some of the responsibilities of it.

The Indian police, it must be remembered at home, are on the whole a fine body of loyal men, and in all the troubles they have behaved, under great provocation, with restraint and reliability. There have been regrettable lapses. But few, under all the circumstances. Many of them are Sikhs and Moslems, and take to police work much as Irishmen do nearer home. They are recruited also on an all-Indian basis, and can be moved about from their own native places as and where wanted.

One of the most hopeful features is that the police have not been subject to communal (religious) influence in the recent disorders, and have acted impartially. These facts are known to the experts who have drafted the recommendations. This has been particularly the case during the economic troubles in Bombay in 1928 and 1929.

- Provided the police know they will be properly supported, and that Indian Ministers themselves will accept responsibility and act with courage, there need be little apprehension of the results of making Provincial Governments responsible for internal peace.

Burma is to be separated from India, and the achievement of the late Lord Randolph Churchill, as Secretary of State for India, is to be nullified. The Burmese differ in race, religion and customs, and almost everything else, from the races inhabiting the Indian Peninsula; and Burma's separation is accepted as inevitable. This separation was agreed to at the Round Table Conference. Later doubts were expressed until it was known what degree of self-government India would obtain.

The cynics say that if we lose India, we shall, at any rate, keep Burma. But the Burmese will want an equal degree of autonomy with India. They will not accept Crown Colony Government to-day.

Diarchy is to go. This also was inevitable. It was not working successfully. An Administration with partial power cannot possibly display that sense of responsibility that is absolutely necessary if India's advance on the road of democracy is to be hastened. Perhaps the most important proposal of all is for virtual autonomy to be granted to the Indian Provinces. Much will be made of the safeguards in the veto of the Governors; but how far this veto will be used will be a question to be decided by the success of the next experiment in democracy.

Indians themselves are sometimes apt to forget how slow has been the growth of our own democracy. Indeed the power of vetoing legislation still remains with the Throne in this country. In theory the King can still veto Parliamentary Bills. It was done frequently in Tudor times. We can also see the same process at work in the British Dominions. As the foundations of democratic government have been strengthened, the Governor's veto has passed further and further into the limbo of forgotten things. So it is with the Royal veto in Britain.

Another great change proposed is the responsibility for law and order, subject to certain safeguards, being henceforth in the hands of Indian Ministers. This is a tremendously important advance. The ugly menace of communal hostility will have now to be smitten by the Indians themselves. Furthermore, there are bound to be very serious industrial disputes in India in the future between capital and labour. Far better for Indian Constitutional Governments in the Provinces, responsible to provincial legislatures, even although they are elected on a franchise of only some 25 per cent. of the adult population, to tackle class warfare, than that we should continue to try and deal with these difficult matters and get the worst of both worlds in the process.

Democrats in all countries will regret that the proposed



franchise in the Simon Report was not to be extended more widely. Nevertheless this is a matter that can be settled at Round Table Conferences, and Parliament is not bound by the recommendations in the Simon Report.

The most violent criticism was over the proposals with regard to the Central Executive. There was very little change proposed in the relations between the Central Legislature and the Central Executive; nor was the composition of the Central Executive to be much changed. The Report opened the way to Federation; but the Central Federal Government under the proposals remained autocratic, at any rate in theory. Nevertheless it must be remembered that with practically autonomous Government in the Provinces the Central Executive will be particularly sensitive to public opinion. Here, again, there is plenty of room for compromise and adjustment as a result of the discussions held following the issue of the Report, if we are to get any settlement at all, whether at St. James's Palace or in India.

Other grounds of criticism were the proposals for indirect representation on the Central Legislature itself. There is a good deal to be said on both sides here. And in favour of the Commission's recommendations it must be remembered that the country is vast, the population huge, and that the difficulties of one Central Legislative body for this sub-continent will increase with every extension of the franchise. Even in England we are hopelessly blocked in Parliament and our legislation is held up by its very volume and perplexity. In Britain we are demanding devolution with a population of only 40,000,000.

I have only dealt with the main heads of the recommendations. For, and this must be remembered, they were only a guide for Parliament for whom the Report was intended.

What should be the next step?

It is to be hoped that by the time these words appear in print the meetings of the Round Table Conference will have ended with agreement. For many months I urged on those responsible the necessity of holding the Round Table Conference at the earliest possible moment; and I consider it should have been summoned immediately the Simon Report was published. One cause of delay was the desire to obtain the presence of leading non-cooperators. This failed. We had to do the best we could under the circumstances.

Secondly, in order that the Round Table Conference could be held with prospects of success, it was made perfectly clear that the field was open and free for any proposals to be discussed in an atmosphere of negotiation instead of in an atmosphere of violence. Let those who advocate complete immediate independence for India table their proposals.

Very important decisions will have to be taken in the near future in this country, but, above all, in India. The waves of unrest in that great sub-continent are said to rise every ten years. We may be able to weather the latest stormy sea; but perhaps the next wave-burst will overwhelm ordered government in India, and will result in years of chaos. If only the energies and patriotism of awakened Young India can be canalised into democratic development this great experiment of voluntarily granting self-government to a huge Empire may succeed and stand as a memorial of Imperialism at its best.

## CHAPTER VIII

### EDUCATION, YOUNG INDIA AND THE FUTURE

IN previous chapters my readers will have seen how the problems of education and defence are allied in India. While half the Central Government's revenue is spent on defence, including the maintenance of law and order, there is not enough money available to spend on education. But because the masses of India are ignorant, greater forces must be maintained for the preservation of internal peace. Again, because the general population is so ignorant the people are poor, and the revenue remains comparatively low. So we are back to the need for education and the lack of money to pay for it!

But there are other difficulties in the way of education for the masses as important as finance. Communal or religious difficulties, especially between the 220,000,000 Hindus and their 70,000,000 Moslem fellow-countrymen, are increasing as a direct result of the working of the limited Constitutional machinery set up under the previous Reforms. Indeed, already the Moslems are demanding separate schools. In some of the Indian States, and I refer to them because these particular States have progressed further on the road towards universal education than British India, the Moslems have their own schools already. But this is a matter of convenience. In others the Hindu and Moslem school-boys and school-girls carry on their studies together in harmony. But communal difference are almost non-existent in the States because, amongst other reasons, the Native Governments have no hesitation in suppressing

communal disorders at the very start, whereas the British Government, by old tradition, hesitates to interfere in matters affecting the religion of the people unless absolutely necessary.

Other difficulties are lack of transport and social complications. India is still woefully deficient in roads, and communications are difficult, especially in the rainy season. In a vast area with inadequate communications, it is obviously difficult to carry on education in the rural districts. And there is great difficulty in obtaining women teachers: purdah, lack of education, and lack of freedom amongst their sex being contributory causes. There are plenty of men teachers, owing to the outpouring of graduates and undergraduates from the universities and colleges; but the shortage of women teachers is an obstacle delaying the organisation of general education. Until, however, the masses receive education, the efficient working of democracy will be difficult and so will the improvement of the lot of the people. It is terribly hard in many of the Provinces of India, where the teeming millions of small farmers are not only ignorant but extraordinarily conservative, to obtain improvements in agricultural methods. When, for example, it is desired to show them how certain crops would pay them better, the answer is that their fathers and grandfathers did not grow these crops, and they will not do so. Where there are demonstration farms, they gradually learn improved methods and the use of better seeds; but this, again, is a slow process.

The Hindu religion is itself an obstacle. The sanctity of the cow forbids the slaughter of cattle even of poor quality, and it is difficult, therefore, to improve the breed of stock. So we are in this dilemma: that the vast agricultural population is ignorant because it is poor, and poor because it is ignorant. For these and many other difficulties the British are, *at present*, entirely blamed by

the extremists; we are told that the British have been governing India for 150 years and that for all these things we are responsible. I was even told by a very learned and distinguished Indian scholar and historian that we are to blame for the refusal of the Hindu smallholders to keep poultry and grow vegetables. Yet centuries before any Englishman appeared on the Malabar Coast the religious leaders of Hinduism laid it down that poultry is unclean and should not be eaten, and also vegetables grown in the ground including root crops and potatoes; and so they are not cultivated in many parts of the country. Yet *the British* are blamed for the poverty of the smallholders. In fact, this tendency to blame Britain for all the ills of India, preventable and unpreventable, has bitten so deeply into the mentality of the politically conscious Indians that the only real hope is to make the Indians themselves responsible for the direction of their own Government services. They can then blame each other, and not us.

Now as to the communal differences. It is no use avoiding this subject, however painful to patriotic and enlightened Indians it may be. The Moslem minority is honestly apprehensive of what a Hindu majority may do to it. I referred above to the sacredness of the cow in the Hindu religion. But beef is cheap in India, and is the staple food of many of the Mohammedan working classes. They fear that a Hindu majority to-day would pass a law making it a crime, on purely religious grounds, to kill cattle for food. This may sound nonsense to the Westerner; but attempts have actually been made to pass such a Bill through the Central Legislature by the elected Hindu members and cases have actually occurred where City municipalities in British India, with an elected Hindu majority, have attempted to close all the beef-butchers' shops and cattle slaughter-houses, and have only been dissuaded by the veto of the British

Governor of the Province. The Mahommedans make no secret of the fact that they would never submit to such a law, without fighting it out; and they would rely on their co-religionists in the Frontier Provinces and beyond in the mountains to help them. Nor would their co-religionists in the mountains be unwilling; for in the process they would hope to loot the plains. Along that lengthy and wild frontier are 300,000 poor but hardy hillmen armed with modern rifles. The Mohammedan fanaticism is equalled by their covetous desire to raid and rob the wealthier inhabitants of the plains.

But the Mohammedans are suspicious and hang together for other reasons. Except in two, or at most, three, Provinces, they are in a political minority, partly because of numbers, partly because of the greater wealth of the Hindus. The Mohammedans are not so well educated as the Hindus, again because they are not so well off, but also because the poorer Mohammedan boys, when they receive any education at all, still learn in an ancient form, chiefly religious, and not very suitable for modern purposes. When it comes to distributing the loaves and fishes in the present state of public opinion, if there is a Hindu majority in any elected body, all the paid posts and offices go to Hindus; and *vice versa* if there is a Mohammedan majority. So the Mohammedan leaders to-day are saying, quite plainly, that they will not tolerate a British-controlled and British-led army at the disposal of a Hindu-controlled government, because it will be used against them to enforce laws obnoxious to the Moslem communities. But if the Army can be Indianised the Moslems feel that no Indian Government dare attempt to use an Indian army for the suppression of one of the great Indian communities because in it will be a quota of soldiers belonging to that community and any such Government would hesitate to split the Army and risk a civil war.

But more important still, there is, happily—and this is the brighter side of the medal—a new spirit growing up amongst the younger men and women. Many of the students, for example, are actively working together on a non-communal basis. Enlightened Mohammedans and Hindus are cooperating in many directions; and, only of less importance, there is a real movement of liberalism towards the depressed classes or “Untouchables”. This movement will gather strength, and the more rapidly the better for India and, indeed, for the whole Empire. Again, in the Trades Unions of the Indian workmen, rudimentary as they are, and with the defects that they have, there are no communal differences. Hindu and Moslem workmen, when organised in Unions, are not divided on religious or racial grounds. Certain of the great Ruling Chiefs have set a noble example by encouraging toleration in their States between the two great communities, and have been scrupulously fair in appointing Hindus, Moslems and Christians to posts and offices on grounds of merit alone. This new spirit is spreading. But it must spread still further—and this is a question of time.

## CHAPTER IX

### INDIAN INDIA—POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC

THE following chapters describe impressions of the present and future position of the Indian States. I visited eight States, great and small, and had the opportunity of conferences and conversations with several other rulers and their principal ministers. While the recipient of the hospitality of Indian Rulers, I also lived in ordinary guest-houses and dak bungalows as necessary, and had the opportunity of seeing as many sides of life in the Indian States as was possible in the time.

It was, of course, impossible in one cold-weather visit to obtain expert knowledge of the semi-independent States covering one-third the area of our Indian Empire, with their 72,000,000 inhabitants, greater in number than the whole white population of the British Commonwealth of nations. But one thing that has struck me very forcibly during my eleven years' membership of the House of Commons, during which time I have tried to keep as closely as possible in touch with Indian affairs, is that, amongst the 615 members of that assembly, no single person pretends special knowledge of these important semi-independent Principalities. So-called experts on British India, among whom I have never claimed to be numbered, are thick on the green benches of the House of Commons. But such knowledge of the States as exists appears to have either been derived from orthodox official fountains of information as represented by the India Office and the Political Department in India, or



else from the propaganda leaflets and books from so-called representatives of the States' subjects which have been such a feature of recent political activity.

I believe the whole truth is not to be obtained from either of these sources. The painstaking Report of the Butler Committee dealt almost entirely with the political and constitutional aspects of the Indian States, and said little about their social and economic condition. I know a number of English peers and members of Parliament who have visited one or more of the States, but they seem to have gone almost solely for the purpose of sport, and to have made, necessarily, very brief visits.

There is a valuable chapter on the Indian States in the Report of the Simon Commission. This is a great advance on the Montagu-Chelmsford Report when the States were only briefly mentioned. And the Rulers and their subjects were well represented at the Round Table Conference. But the States remain one of the most puzzling of the many problems facing those responsible for the future of our great Indian Empire.

Those of my generation living in England, and especially those of us who to-day have the terrible responsibility as Members of Parliament of attempting to decide India's Constitutional future, can remember two distinct phases of this problem:

In pre-war days the Indian States were displayed as model examples of Swaraj in action. Little detail was heard of them, but their people were described as contented, while the more progressive States were held up as shining examples in comparison with the administration of British India.

Then came a change with the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. The Chamber of Princes was formed, and now the rulers of the States and their advisers and subjects are recognised as an important element that must be considered in any future Indian Constitution. The col-

minating point in this second phase was the inclusion of the States in the invitation to the Round Table Conference just held.

But now no longer do the Left Wing of the apostles of democracy in India point to the States as "shining examples"! Indeed the "Independence Party" admit freely that they are one main obstacle to the attainment of their goal of an Independent India. This may account for the recent outpouring of propaganda against the administration of the States. Yet recently an article appeared in the *Glasgow Forward*, probably the most influential of our Labour papers in Britain, whose proprietor and former editor is a member of the present Government, and himself one of those who have taken the trouble to make a study on the spot of British India conditions—viz., Mr. Thomas Johnston, the present Under-Secretary of State for Scotland—published an article intending to show that the supposed communal difficulties in the way of Swaraj in British India are bogies, and the evidence cited was the lack of communal hostility and friction in the Indian States. And this is the first phenomenon that has impressed itself upon me as an open-minded observer of Indian conditions and yet one of those charged with the responsibility of deciding on India's future.

Widely as the Indian States differ from each other in social, political and commercial development, and also in forms of Government, they have this in common: that, with insignificant exceptions, there is no real communal hostility in the States between Hindus and Moslems.

I have been at pains to find out the reason for this comparatively happy state of affairs. It appears to be that the Rulers and their advisers have found, by long experience, that it is necessary to behave with impartiality towards both their Hindu and Moslem subjects, whether the ruler is a Hindu or Moslem, and whichever is in the

minority among his subjects. The cherished British principles of compromise and "give and take" have been exercised to the full, together with a firm determination to stamp hard on any attempt at communal agitation. Admittedly the Indian rulers, being of the people themselves, have an advantage over the British Government, with the latter's tradition of rigid non-interference in religious matters until heads begin to be broken. But their example of toleration and justice between the communities has been magnificent.

The next vivid impression is that the younger generation of rulers, together with their ministers, and, to a certain extent, their subjects, have changed their outlook during the last decade or two to a far greater extent than is even the case with Government and governed in British India. The old school of rulers, intensely conservative, deferential to the advice of the all-powerful political agents and residents, isolated one from the other, untravelled and unacquainted with Western conditions and ideas, were poles apart from the present travelled, frequently British-educated and generally enlightened generation of younger rulers.

I shall purposely refrain from mentioning the name of any individual State or ruler. But I know the case of one conscientious and hard-working ruler of the older school who insisted, until quite recently, on adjudicating all his own law cases. Naturally there were considerable arrears. When it was suggested to His Highness that he was holding up public business, he protested that the humblest of his subjects had just as much right to his jurisdiction and judgment as the greatest. "For," he said, "it is just as important to a man who has been robbed of ten rupees, if that is all he possesses in the world, as it is for one of my other subjects who has a dispute over a lakh of rupees." And with this attitude there was no ground for argument.

Certain of the rulers have been under drum fire from successive Viceroys, Political Secretaries, Secretaries of State, not to mention British Indian politicians, for the last ten years for not making greater progress in Constitutional development. It is common knowledge that the attitude of Government, and especially of the present highly respected Viceroy, is to desire three minima of governmental principle—viz., a separate and fixed Civil List, a Judiciary distinct and separate from the Executive, and a pensionable and established Official Service. But beyond these minima is a gentle pressure for "Constitutionalism or reformism." I shall have a word to say about this aspect of the problem a little later. But the way of the reformer is hard the world over, and not less in the Indian States than elsewhere.

Let me give two examples: I know of one great Indian Prince who was not only educated in England, but who by temperament was and is progressive, and who sat at the feet during his minority of Radical sages and statesmen. On succeeding—and this was long before the reform movement—one of his first steps was to propose a Constitution on a mildly democratic basis. His subjects fell in with the idea at first, but almost immediately objected and said they preferred the old system of personal rule.

The other example is of a State of great area and sparse population which would be described to-day as well administered but "backward" in the political sense. In answer to the continual drum fire of suggestion, the Council of State proposed to make a first start with the capital, a beautiful old-world city and one of the architectural gems of India. The proposal was to grant self-government to the city in the form of an elected municipality. There were immediate protests from the citizens! The notables, merchants and other men of substance immediately "smelt a rat." They contributed

their quota of taxation already, they protested, and in exchange received such amenities as they desired. Municipal government, they presumed, would mean separate rates and taxes, and, to their mind, additional taxation in any case; and their objections were not only immediate but almost violent, and the idea of municipalisation had to be dropped. Indeed, it is as true in the Indian States as it is anywhere else in the world that it is only possible to govern with the consent of the governed. "Ah," it will be said, "certain of the States are not well administered." This is admitted, and deplored, and by the general body of rulers themselves. Of 108 Salute States there are eight or ten that may be described as really backward, or reactionary, or badly governed. Both these and the better-administered States must, and in fact are, looking to the future; and it is the future, after all, that concerns us most.

But we in England, no less in my own party than among other schools of thought, have begun to abandon the idea that all that is necessary in any country—Eastern or Western—is to establish an elected Parliament on the British model, and all will be well. The problem of applying democratic ideas to Eastern communities is particularly difficult, as my most "advanced" Japanese friends are the first to admit. Short cuts are apt to prove the longest in the end.

Before attempting to prophesy with regard to the future of the Indian States, their vast territories and huge populations, it might be well to state certain premises. Speaking very generally—and this premise will, I know, be agreed to by all informed and unprejudiced persons—the States have not had a fair chance up to now. To begin with, they remained "Indian India" either because they were far removed from the sea coast and the main trade routes, or because their lands were mountainous or desert or sparsely populated or out of

the main stream of Indian life. This was one of the reasons why they were not absorbed during the Dalhousie period of expansion.

Then up till quite recently it has been a deliberate policy of Government to keep the States not only divided but poor and weak. This was partly, to put it plainly, a dog-in-the-manger attitude so that the good results of British government in the rest of India would be more apparent; and partly fear of the States becoming richer and more powerful. The development of railways and communications, of trade and industry, has been checked and hampered in the States as a matter of policy. We see the relics of this policy even to-day. I suppose certain departments of the Government of India are the most unchanging and unchangeable of all bureaucracies that have ever existed since organised government was first attempted. What excuse, for example, can be made to-day for preventing or delaying the States from, first, installing a telephone system, and, secondly, extending it to communicate with the trunk telephone system of the Indian Peninsula? Why should a merchant in a city in an Indian State be prevented from using the telephone on his lawful occasions beyond the boundaries of the State? Why has nearly all railway development in the States been held up and obstructed? Fifty or sixty years ago this wonderful Government feared some vague military danger from the States; therefore they must be deprived, as far as possible, of modern means of communication; this policy became traditional and survives to-day.

Every means, fair and unfair, has been used to prevent the maritime States from developing their ports and independent seaborne trade. This was partly due to the policy described above, partly, I fear, traceable to the "pull" of the mercantile interests, European and Indian alike, in the great seaports of British India. In the past

the Political Department had immense power; and it is human nature to cling to power, especially bureaucratic power.

If India as a whole is to aim at and achieve Dominion Status this policy of distrust with regard to the States must be abandoned. One would have thought that after the magnificent services of the rulers and their subjects during both the Mutiny and the Great War the ridiculous prohibition of up-to-date arms for their forces would have been removed. Indeed, the change of spirit that the present Secretary of State boasts of with regard to the government of British India might now be extended to the States. And with this change of spirit might be a change in the whole conditions of service of the powerful and important Political Department. Its present somewhat haphazard methods of training and recruitment should give way to conditions of service similar to those in the British Diplomatic Corps, as is suggested by the Butler Committee.

The demand for "Parliamentarianism," as might be expected, is most urgent and insistent in those States which have been described in the past as the more progressive. In certain of the "model" States the facilities for education are considerably in advance of those in British India; and as the subjects have become educated so they have become articulate and are demanding Constitutional reforms. The need for granting these demands I have found recognised by most Indian rulers. Indeed, I have found a new kind of rivalry in some cases. The older rivalry of magnificence amongst rulers has given way to a new competition in progressiveness. For example, the very energetic and industrious ruler of one of the great Northern States informed me that he intended to outshine his great rival by introducing a complete Constitution which would be greatly in advance of that introduced by his competitor some years previously.

Such competition, I venture to suggest, is healthy, and well worthy of encouragement. Again, several of the rulers have taken care to engage some of the most successful and highly trained Indian and European members of the Indian Civil Service to assist in the government of their States.

But how great is the interior demand for Constitutionalism in the States? It has been admitted to me by leading and influential British Indian politicians of the most progressive tendencies that the real political awakening of the States' subjects has not begun.

Any casual reader of the present propaganda against the States would imagine that their subjects were living in the direst poverty and want compared to the happier people in British India. I have looked hard for evidence of this, but have failed to find it. Indeed, speaking generally, I have found the villages and their inhabitants in the States, to all outward appearances, considerably more prosperous, their people better fed, better clothed and their women better bejewelled than in the villages of similar Provinces in British India. State subjects of great wealth and influence and with commercial connections and establishments in British India of such importance that they can feel quite secure and independent of their own ruler, and certainly with no axes to grind, have assured me that the subjects as a whole, in the great majority of the States, are *not* discontented and do not feel themselves worse off than their fellow-subjects under direct British jurisdiction.

There are, of course, exceptions, and there are discontented people everywhere. I have yet to find farmers in any part of the world who do not grumble. That the people of the States are happier than millions of those in British India was stated to me by a British Indian leader whose name is known throughout the world. True, the reason given was somewhat startling.



It was that the Government of British India was more efficient, ruthless, and less human than in the States and therefore the States' peoples were not "ground down" to the same extent. I only quote this opinion because of its source.

Without a doubt, as democracy progresses and as political ideas develop in British India, there will be repercussions in the States. I believe it would be good policy for the Chamber, and it is to be hoped that some of the greater States that have held aloof from its deliberations will, as a result of events in the near future, now join its Councils, to engage the best constitutional and juridical expert advice for the drawing up of a set of model Constitutions for large, medium size and smaller States, capable of adjustment to local conditions, and with the recommendation that some such Constitution should be adopted.

The very small States present a different problem. Even where they have the advantage of the personal oversight of an able ruler their revenues are too small to be able to afford a suitable judiciary; nor indeed is there work enough in the smaller States all the year round for a properly constituted Court of Appeal. Already there is, in certain Provinces, a pooling of a portion of the revenues of the smaller States for educational purposes. Not only might this be extended with advantage, but a common Judiciary might be introduced for groups of smaller States, with Appeal Judges travelling on circuit, and sitting in the State courts in turn. The same pooling of resources amongst smaller States might well be attempted for health services so that central hospitals with the latest equipment could serve the needs of a group of smaller States.

As for the Constitutional position of the States in India, the Government of India, the time has surely come, and I am sure all political parties in Britain would agree.

for the establishment of a Supreme Court of Appeal in India, independent of Government, to which disputes between States and the Government of India could be referred.

Another proposal that might well be considered with regard to the smaller States is that the heir-apparent should be sent for a period of training to one of the larger and more progressive States, there to learn methods of administration, etc.

Certain of these proposals may be regarded at first with considerable suspicion by rulers of smaller States of ancient and proud lineage and jealous of their prerogatives. But India has to face a period of great change and stress, and statesmanlike wisdom and foresight would appear to demand some such adjustments and reforms.

Similarly with the Customs. Here the States have a real grievance. It is to be hoped that some just arrangement will be come to by which the States' internal Customs would be given up altogether in exchange for a reasonable quota of the Customs receipts for the whole Peninsula.

Indian India, it will be admitted, has not yet taken her full share in the life of the great sub-continent. It may well be that the reason is that she has not had the opportunity. That she has a great part to play in the future will also be admitted.

Sympathy, understanding, and the recognition not only of difficulties but of the general goodwill existing towards both British India and the Empire as a whole will do more good than abuse and hostile propaganda against Indian India and her rulers and peoples. Given these, not only are there no grounds for pessimism, but the future of Indian India is bright.

## CHAPTER X

### THE REAL ORIENT

THE preceding chapter dealt with certain political and economic questions affecting the self-governing Indian States. What are the social conditions on these little known but vast and important territories of the British Empire?

I advise any traveller to India who desires to see something of the still unspoilt East to visit one or more of the Independent States ruled over by their own Maharajas. They are Indian India, and include those parts of the great Peninsula which have remained most unaffected by modern developments, the surging streams of industrialism, and what we call "Western civilisation".

The States range in size from Hyderabad, larger than France, with a population of over 12,000,000, to tiny areas, the size of an English parish, ruled over by petty chiefs, which might be compared to the property of a British estate-owner. There are 108 first-class or Salute States. These are the territories where the rulers are entitled to a salute of cannon, either on visiting a neighbouring State, or entering the territory of British India.

The premier Indian State, Hyderabad, is ruled over by the Nizam. His Exalted Highness, to give him his full title, is a Mohammedan ruling over a majority of Hindus. The Nizam is reputed to be the richest man in the world, and he has more bullion, convertible cash and treasure at his disposal than any other individual. But many of the rulers of the smaller States boast of ancient lineage,

are the heads of historic Houses, and are very tenacious of their rights and privileges.

What of social life in these interesting territories?

They are certainly the real Orient, especially on those States that lie off the beaten track. In Baroda, a "model" State, and one of the largest, the chief towns lie on the main railway lines, considerable industrial development has taken place, education is widespread, and the whole administration is thoroughly up to date from the Indian point of view and even by Western standards. But a twelve-hours' journey by train to the North takes the traveller to the great Western Rajputana Desert State of Jodhpore.

This is a territory as large as Ireland, without the four Northern Counties of Ulster, but with less than one-third of Ireland's population, mostly desert with fertile tracts, almost untouched, and certainly unspoilt, by Western industrialism and development. The capital is one of the most beautiful cities I have ever seen, surrounded by a wall and dominated by a wonderful old red sandstone castle, like a great fairy palace, perched on a flat-topped mountain. The mighty castle gates are armed with iron spikes to prevent them being battered in by trained elephants in an assault. On the gate posts are still the plaster hands of former Princesses who committed *suttee*, burning themselves on the funeral pyres on the death of their Lords. Its winding streets pass between beautiful sandstone buildings, mellowed by age and ornamented with really fine carvings in the Indo-Saracenic style.

Jodhpore boasts of certain advances in the way of schools and hospitals; but the general life of its people goes on as it has done in India for centuries. So far is it off the tourist track that I could not find a photograph of its buildings for sale in all the city.

A Princess of Jodhpore was the beloved wife of the Mogul Emperor, Shah Jehan. The same family still

rules the State, as it has done for centuries, and is one of the proudest clans of the Rajput ruling caste of India. I talked with a cadet of this House, a relative of the present Ruler, and when the Empress was mentioned, his great-great-aunt, the young man apologised for her and said that she was the one disgrace in his family! She had married, it was true, an Emperor, but a man not of her own caste. And my friend meant what he said about the "disgrace" quite seriously.

Even to this day the Rajput families keep up the practice of *purdah*. Their ladies live in absolute seclusion. This was necessary in the days of the Moguls to hide their presence from the eyes of the conquerors so that they should not be carried off, and the custom survives. When these ladies drive out they must either go in covered carriages or in motor-cars with opaque glass windows in which they are invisible to the outside world. On the elephants they sit in covered howdahs; in camp, canvas screens surround the part of the camping-ground where their tents are pitched. No man, not of their family, can ever see them. Their gardens are surrounded by high walls. This system is apparently tolerable for the richer families and those of the Princes and the nobles; but many of the Rajputs are poor. The lands granted to them for their maintenance in former times have been divided and sub-divided and now many of these aristocratic families occupy no more land than the ordinary farmer. *Purdah* for the wives and daughters of poor men in a hot climate causes great hardship; and in spite of the intense conservatism of the Indian caste it is gradually being abandoned. One great Rajput clan went even further. It was the custom of the Mogul Emperors to demand the daughters of noble Rajput houses as wives. Refusal meant risking the property, position, and even the lives of the family.

This clan, therefore, made a point of killing all inter-

girls at birth. The practice grew into a custom and survived for some years after the original cause had been removed through the declining power of the Mogul dynasty. The present elder generation of ladies of this family, all now very old, of course, were the first to escape infanticide for three centuries. The heads of this clan and its branches are amongst the most important Ruling Princes in India.

We must go back in Western history to find a similar example of family pride and the sense of honour carried to such absurd length; but it illustrates a phase of Indian life and thought among the fighting and ruling caste that still survives in different form to this day and which it will be impossible to ignore in the future life of India.

There are ten clans of the Rajputs proper, of which eight have numerous branches. Members of a clan *never* marry in the clan; but they can *only* marry the member of another Rajput clan.

Marriages between Rajputs are always arranged by the families, and, up till recently, bride and bridegroom never even met till the marriage day. Now, as a great innovation amongst the more progressive families, the young people are allowed to meet once or twice, after they have been solemnly affianced, in the presence of other relatives.

When we consider how the women of British India are beginning to enter the professions, travel, engage in politics and adopt Western customs generally, it will be seen what a gulf there still is between Indian India and British India. The Sikh and Mohammedan aristocracies maintain the same purdah system. It will be some years before it is abandoned.

The ancient States, under their hereditary Princes, have withstood great stresses and heavy attacks in the past, and appear suited to the Indian temperament. The

original form of government of the Indian States, great and small, was feudal; for they were founded by warrior races or clans, in some cases by conquest, in others through the grant of territories by the Moguls or earlier native Emperors. The Government rested on a military organisation and the same spirit survives. The rulers are Mahrattas as in the case of Gwalior, Indore and Baroda; or Mohammedan, as in Hyderabad and Bhopal; or Sikh, like the Princes of the great territory of Patiala in the Punjab. But the majority of the older States are ruled over by the heads of Rajput-Hindu clans.

The Rajputs are the warrior and governing caste of India and their rule is strengthened by religious sanction. In these ancient Rajput States, particularly, the history of the family and the State can be traced in the ancient fortress-palaces, still the centre and symbol of hereditary power. Indeed, the old family palaces are still called "forts" where we should describe them as castles. To pass through their frowning gateways is to step straight into the Golden Age of Indian chivalry and romance.

These old feudal strongholds have usually been built as an inner citadel in a fortified walled capital-city. In recent years modern palaces, surrounded by gardens, beautifully furnished, electrically lighted, and so on, have been built for the Ruling Princes in the open country outside their crowded cities. But the stronghold of the family remains always in the old fort in the town. Here are the archives, the State jewels, the armoury and the heirlooms. Here live the female relatives of the older generation, still in strict purdah, surrounded by their servants and eunuchs, carrying on the customs and ritual of the Middle Ages.

These old fortress-palaces, though the architecture is often very beautiful, are not particularly pleasant to live in, especially during the hot season. So they are

nearly always deserted for the modern palaces in the country. The great halls and apartments are empty, the gilt and the decoration is fading. But they recover the atmosphere of their past splendour on one day in every year when they are the scene of the annual Durbar, or Feudal Court. The ruler, seated on the Gadi or sacred throne, in his native costume and regalia, receives the homage of his feudal nobles, principal subjects and retainers in strict order of precedence. At other times the empty throne is kept under strict guard day and night by armed sentries; for only the ruler can use it. It is the symbol of temporary power but has a deep religious symbolism. It is usually of carved ivory and sandalwood, or of silver with gold mountings overhung with silk canopies and furnished with beautifully embroidered cushions. Its yearly occupancy by the Prince is a reaffirmation of his sovereign powers.

The wealth in jewels possessed by the Ruling Princes of India is colossal. The family jewels are the last thing that an Indian of high rank will part with; yet during the Great War many historical jewels were sacrificed and sold for the service of the King-Emperor.

One of the greatest of the Princes was good enough to have his jewels brought out for my inspection. They were placed in order on tables in the great Durbar Hall. The old bearded family retainers were in charge; and they never took their eyes from me. An armed guard was posted at the gates of the Old Fort. Not that I was suspect; but it was their duty to see that the regalia remained safe, as it had been for so many hundreds of years. The profusion of every kind of precious stones, and their value, was extraordinary. They had been collected and added to in generation after generation. Some of the diamonds were from the Royal regalia of the Kings of France. I was particularly charmed with one diamond necklace, which I handled, that had been



remounted in a modern setting by one of the most famous of European jewellers. The expert had valued it at over a million pounds sterling. There was also an emerald belt of ancient workmanship in an enamel setting, three hundred years old, of exquisite beauty and valued at £750,000. The total value of this collection of diadems, ornaments for the turban, necklaces, bracelets and earrings, including probably the finest collection of pearls in the world, was not less than seven million pounds sterling.

I do not think this particular collection will ever be added to. The present holder of these jewels is using his wealth for the establishment of new schools and hospitals, for the endowment of professorial chairs in his University, in waterworks for the capital, and electrical power stations for the outlying districts. His ancestors boasted of their jewelry; his pride is in the progress of his people.

There are many treasures in the old and new palaces of Indian India besides the gems and wonderful old carpets, tapestries and furniture. The collections of ancient manuscripts and books, Sanskrit and Persian, beautifully illuminated and illustrated by hand, are worth a special visit to India to inspect. The Mogul and Rajput paintings, the ancient mosaics and inlaid work, the beautiful old weapons and armour are all accumulations not only of wealth but of art that could only have been made by powerful families whose chiefs had been collectors advised by the leading artists, experts and savants of their day.

In Baroda there is preserved in the armoury a gold and a silver cannon. There were once complete batteries of these useless and costly toys; for they are full size artillery pieces and real weapons! These two have at least been retained as examples of what oriental extravagance was in the past. The others have been melted down and

the proceeds used for the more prosaic purpose of the material development of the State.

But enough treasures remain in Baroda and other States to make it worth while to keep the old forts in good repair and the soldiers trained and ready to guard them.

Every Salute State in India maintains its own army. In the smaller States this may be only a small bodyguard of cavalry superbly mounted and wearing gorgeous uniforms, for the Prince; and an armed *gendarmerie* for the workaday business of preventing crime. The larger States possess considerable armies with up-to-date equipment. They are organised for Imperial defence purposes and in the Great War many of the units from the States did good service. There are a handful of British officers acting as instructors and inspectors, scattered amongst the States; but otherwise the State armies are trained and commanded by their own Indian officers. So far, 152 units, mostly cavalry and infantry, but not forgetting the famous Camel Corps of Bikaner, have been passed as efficient for purposes of Imperial defence. These are maintained entirely out of the revenues of the States. In addition there are militia, *gendarmerie*, and armed police; while the feudal landholders both in the Rajput and Mohammedan States are bound to perform military service when called upon to do so. Most of the Indian soldiers in the native regiments of the Indian Army come from the Indian States. There is little doubt that in case of any serious trouble in India these State Forces would give a good account of themselves.

Because most of the States are in the more remote parts of India, which are also less thickly populated, and contain the mountains and jungles, they afford very good sport with the rifle. India is famous for its big game and the organisation of big-game shoots has been reduced to a fine art in certain of the States. Tigers, panthers, bears, wolves, wild elephants and many varieties of deer,

large and small, are the principal game available. In the Mohammedan State of Junaghud in Kathiawar are the last lions left of a species that once roamed all India. There are about 200 of them remaining in the great forests of that State.

I know of one Ruler of a State containing the best tiger-shooting in India, whose ambition it is to account for a thousand tigers before he dies. He has already shot six hundred. But his brother-in-law, the heir of one of the premier States of India, has practically abandoned the rifle for the cinema camera, and has made a hobby of photographing wild game in its natural state.

The total area of these States is nearly one-third of India, but the subjects of their rulers number only 72,000,000, out of a total population of 320,000,000. It will be seen, therefore, that they include many of the most sparsely populated districts. During the period of British conquest and expansion in India we occupied those territories which were more accessible to the sea, or were more populous, richer, and contained the greatest opportunities for trade. For we British, and this is acknowledged, went to India in the first place not as Imperialists nor as missionaries nor as rulers of India for India's good, but as merchant adventurers for the purpose of making accessible the rich markets of the East to our trade and shipping. Many of the territories left under the rule of native-born Princes were not brought under British domination because it was considered that the results would not justify the trouble and expenditure. Others, again, were left out because their Rulers were our allies in fighting against the French or the Portuguese or the Mahratta Confederacy or whoever was challenging our Power in East India Company days at the time. We made Treaties with these territories guaranteeing their perpetual independence.

How do the Maharajas, their ministers and subjects,

regard the agitation for political progress in British India and the advances towards democracy that have already taken place? The attitude of the Princes, and there is no reason to suppose that the majority of their subjects do not uphold them in this, is, that while they have no desire to interfere in the affairs of British India, they nevertheless intend to adhere to their Treaties, they will resist the breaking away of India from the British Commonwealth of Nations, and they demand a voice in certain services of British India, such as Customs and tariffs, which affect the position of every one of their subjects. Indeed, the fiscal situation is one of their principal grievances. Under the 1919 Act, aforesaid, India has fiscal autonomy and is raising her tariff barriers higher and higher. This, no doubt, is intended to benefit Indian manufacturers. But one undoubted result is to raise prices. The Indian States, for various reasons, including a policy in the past of keeping them weak and divided and therefore of discouraging their economic development, are less industrialised than the rest of India. They benefit least from the tariffs but feel the increase in prices, and get no share in the revenues. I only mention this in passing, to show that what happens in British India is only a matter of indifference to the Indian States to a limited degree.

Now it would be a mistake to suppose that all the Indian States are "backward." In economic development, and largely for reasons beyond the control of their Rulers and peoples, they are behind British India. But to say that they are mediæval in their outlook and untouched by the same spirit of change that accounts for some of the unrest in the remainder of the Peninsula, would be untrue. As one ruler of a small State said to me, his family had governed its territories for seven hundred years without a break, during which Empires in India have risen and fallen and the whole Peninsula

has run with the bloodshed of civil wars and invasions. If his subjects had maintained his House as their rulers through all these strains and stresses, might it not be conceivable, this old gentleman argued, that they would survive the latest threats in India to the British Government? We have, indeed, in the Indian States a tough element, a form of native government that the people understand, and it may well be that they will stand like breakwaters in a sea of unrest and break the force of the waves of anarchy that the pessimists believe will swamp the whole of India.

Yet Indian India is bound to move with the times. There will be constitutional changes in any case. It is due to the populations of these great territories that there should be economic development, and that their natural resources and minerals should be developed and made available for the markets of the world. But they still retain many of the features of the old Orient that are passing elsewhere before the march of progress as exemplified by the railway, the motor-car, and, presently, the aeroplane.

All lovers of the East will hope that this development and modernisation will leave untouched some of the more picturesque features of a civilisation and culture that has survived for so many centuries and has so much about it that is attractive.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE CRUX OF THE PROBLEM—THE ARMY OF INDIA

IN previous chapters I have dealt principally with the financial, educational and religious aspects of the Indian situation. I now come to an even more thorny question, that of the Army, already touched upon, but which now requires more detailed treatment.

It is obvious now that we made a blunder with regard to the Army in the earlier Reforms. We have Indianised the Army too slowly, especially as regards the officers and technical services. Many thinking men and women in India, both British and native-born, are saying to-day that our method of dealing with the Army will be the real test of the sincerity of our declared policy.

The main trouble is the officers; for India has plenty of private soldiers and N.C.O.'s. It is being said to-day, and I think justly, that the success of the attempt to grant Indian self-government will depend on the rapidity with which we assist the formation of an Officer Corps. It cannot be done quickly enough by sending selected young Indians to Sandhurst. The cost is very high, and so many are required that Sandhurst would soon become more of an Indian training centre than a British one. An Indian Sandhurst is needed, or rather three or four, and it is absolutely necessary to get on with this, and at once. At Sandhurst we only train Indians as officers for the Infantry and Cavalry, because we have in the past intended to hold India by the sword and we have not trained Indians as Artillery or Engineer officers as part of a deliberate policy. From now onwards one or more

Indian "Woolwich's" are needed for the training of gunner and sapper officers, and also Indian "Cranwell's" where we can train Indians as flying officers. Two or three Indian officers have gone to Cranwell in England to be trained, so there is no new principle here; and the present very able officer in charge of the Indian Air Force, Air-Marshal Sir Geoffrey Salmond, has been vigorous and successful in establishing flying clubs in India where young Indians can learn to be air pilots. So there will be no new principle in creating an Indian Air Force. There are military objections to Indianising more than the present eight units, or, at the most, an additional eight, making sixteen in all; but they will have to be met in some way. Purely military considerations will have to give way to other considerations of High Policy. The military case put forward is that during the transition period the present Indian Army, with its British officers, none too large, again according to expert military opinion, for guarding the Frontier and keeping internal order, will be dangerously weakened. One way of meeting this would be a temporary increase in the establishment and in that case the extra cost would have to be faced up to and met by the Indian politicians. *For they cannot have it both ways.*

Now as to the time it would take to Indianise. Pessimists think it will be two or three generations before we can Indianise the Army and officer it efficiently. Optimists say ten or fifteen years, and point to the Indian officers who command Indian State armies which not only are not inefficient but already have their rightful place in the scheme of Imperial defence.

British national pride declares that an Indianised army would not be as efficient as a British-officered Army, and though Indian national pride would not admit this, let it be granted for the sake of my argument. Now why should an Indianised army be expected to meet the

Army of a first-class Power like Japan or France? The problems before an Indian army are the defence of the Frontier and the maintenance of internal security. Formidable as are the hill tribes of the Frontier they have no modern equipment. Before we crossed the Indus, the Sikh Confederacy kept the hill tribes in order and occupied Kabul when necessary with a Sikh army under Sikh officers and with only a handful of European adventurers to assist it. Ranjit Singh's famous army had only six European officers.

Russia may begin her old advance towards India once more. But communications beyond the Frontier are bad, the country difficult, and the "Russian menace" is hardly likely to materialise for another fifteen or twenty years, if then. When and if it does materialise it will be in the form of a flying army. And we shall have something to say in the West.

As showing the mentality existing in politically conscious circles in India, I have heard educated, responsible Indian ladies and gentlemen of high social position and by no means to be counted amongst the extremists, state gravely that the Frontier troubles on the North-West in the summer and autumn of 1930 were deliberately engineered and stage-managed for the purpose of impressing British and American public opinion! This belief was expressed quite sincerely and the small number of casualties among the British forces put forward as an argument in favour of the theory. On the other hand the seriousness of the Frontier menace was admitted to me by a prominent member of the Congress Party while I was in India. *Mahatma* Gandhi stated quite openly that Swaraj would immediately be followed by Moslem invasions from the North. His remedy was non-resistance and the teaching of the use of his spinning-wheel to the Afridi tribesmen!

The Simon Commission's proposed remedy is an



Imperial British Army guarding the Frontier as a border line of the whole Empire. The same idea was advanced by leading Hindu politicians in my conversations with them. But the two proposals have this difference: the Statutory Commission visualises a Central Government with reserved powers able to ensure the safety of the lines of communication of this British-controlled Army in the Frontier provinces, including the British troops. The Congress leaders visualised complete self-government except for this Frontier force under the orders of Whitehall. I can at once see the objections of the military to the latter position. Serious disorders might break out in the plains at the same time as a rising in the mountains with threatened attacks from the North and even an Afghan invasion. A British Army would find itself threatened from in front and be "in the air" through the breaking of its communications to the South.

We therefore must come back to the solution, alone compatible with responsible Indian self-government, of an Indian-officered and controlled army responsible to an Indian Federal Government at Delhi. Only along these lines can real progress towards Dominion Status be made.

The naval position is somewhat different. A navy can and must safeguard its own lines of communication. Also there is good precedent already in the British Empire for Dominions relying for naval defence on Whitehall. Canada and South Africa have only slight naval forces. Also League of Nations sanctions can be applied more readily at sea than on land for obvious reasons. And as both the League of Nations and responsible self-government in India develop so will an Indian Dominion be able, in the last resort, to rely more and more on the threats or action of the Council of the League for the safety of her coasts as described in Chapter VI. Furthermore there are the substantial

beginnings of an Indian Navy already formed out of the old Royal Indian Marine, with a fine record of service in peace and war behind it. Indianisation is making some progress here. All the old difficulties were advanced by the doubters just as they are to-day with reference to the Army. We were told that no suitable human material was available among the maritime Races for positions of responsibility; or, that while there were good enough sailors to be found along the Indian coasts, they had not the necessary martial qualities.

A solution has been found by recruiting suitable youths for the infant Indian Navy from the martial races of the Punjab, hundred of miles from the sea. These lads are doing very well and make excellent material for man-of-war's men. Some of them will become officers, and I have no doubt will do as well as the Japanese, Siamese, Chinese, Turkish and other naval officers of Foreign Powers who have been trained in the past by British naval officers with the *desire and the will* to make a success of the job.

And what Power will threaten India's coasts in the future? Japan is the only *possibility*. But to speak of a Japanese descent on India by sea because of the absence of a strong Indian Navy, or interference on the trade routes with Indian merchant shipping because of the absence of Indian cruisers, is equally absurd.

At any rate the experiment of creating an Indianised army must be tried, and it must be seriously tackled. In ten or twenty years' time the difficulties that face the present Labour Government at Westminster will have to be faced by whatever Government is then in power, and if we have not made substantial progress these difficulties will have greatly increased. Already there is considerable unrest amongst the low-paid Indian workmen; while the peasants are so miserably poor in great areas of India

that they may begin to make trouble at any time. Present religious difficulties and dangers will then be replaced by economic difficulties and even attempts at an economic revolution by force. Wise British statesmanship should aim at enabling Indians to keep order in their own household. The best type of British officials in the great Indian Civil Service will not themselves be willing to continue a policy of mere oppression and negation. They work amicably *now* with their Indian colleagues in the Civil Service. It is admitted that there is still plenty of corruption and other evils in the lower ranks of these Services; but these again can in the end only be removed by Indians themselves working through a healthy public opinion.

But, it will be said in England, how about these "wild men" in India who presently dominate Congress, preach violence and advocate the repudiation of State debts? There has been reaction against them and their policy already. Indian merchants and business men, and there are plenty of wealth, position and influence, have in the past been subscribing to the Congress Funds and supporting the Congress demands. But there has recently been a distinct movement of capital and investments out of India and a fall in the value of Indian securities as a result of the wild talk of repudiation. India needs certain loans for immediate capital expenditure on development, especially on electrification, canals, and railways. It will be difficult to raise these loans under present circumstances.

I have met Indians of all shades of opinion and all classes and castes; but I have yet to meet one who did not repudiate privately the talk of disowning the legal debts of the Indian Government.

As for the violence campaign—the attempted outrage on the Viceroy's train early in 1930, and other acts of assassination or attempted murder, gave a real shock to

all shades of opinion in the country. Even the Anarchist elements, I am informed, realise that they made a blunder. Lord Irwin is very popular, and the attempt to murder him and his wife, when they were on their way to take up their residence in the new Viceroy's house in Delhi, was particularly exasperating to Indian religious opinion, which has a strength difficult for most Westerners to appreciate.

As for the general campaign of violence, it has not only had unpleasant results from the Governors of the Provinces, for the police and military have acted against crime; but once violent disorders begin they may spread to the religious communities and the 70,000,000 Mohammedans and the 2,500,000 Sikhs, both of which races or communities are by no means averse to fighting, may take a hand against the Hindus.

So sensible Indian opinion is averse to violent methods, and this opinion certainly includes that of *Mahatma* Gandhi; while if the young hotheads continue their violent methods they will be sorry for themselves before the business is ended.

It is still broadly true that the non-cooperation movement is non-violent. Viewed without prejudice there is something fine about great masses of people waging a bloodless war against authority. But patience may break down on either side and the floodgates of anarchy be opened wide.

At present all the most virile and intelligent elements in India are working either for Dominion Status or for complete Independence. Politics in the Indian Empire have become an obsession with the great majority of the educated class. This class is slowly increasing in numbers and political unrest is spreading fast from it to the masses. No democrat would object to political unrest in a country like India if only its people were educated. Education again will soften the worst hostilities between the

religious communities and indeed is already acting in this way.

Provided we at Home proceed steadily with our settled policy for India and are prepared to take legitimate risks in overcoming some of the difficulties I have outlined, the position is by no means hopeless. Indians abuse us hotly enough to-day; but underlying the abuse is a recognition of certain good qualities in the British race and of the part these qualities have played in India during the last hundred years.

When the energies of articulate India are harnessed to solving her real economic and other difficulties, feeling towards Britain and the British people will certainly change for the better. And there will be great scope for British and Indian cooperation in developing the resources and increasing the happiness of this great Empire and her peoples.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE AND AFTER

THE London Round Table Conference adjourned on January 19th 1931, after sitting for nine weeks.

In what way has the Conference altered the situation? What hope has it given for the future? Has it contributed to a peaceful solution of the Indian problem? Its main result was the enlightenment of British public opinion as to the political advancement of India.

The contacts made with the sixty delegates from India and their advisers and assistants were most valuable. I had first-hand evidence myself of the good effects produced by friendly and informal talks between Indian Rulers and political leaders on the one hand, and British political leaders on the other.

Yet the Conference came near to shipwreck more than once.

There is a crime in the Royal Navy known as "hazarding." A navigator, who, while not actually wrecking his ship on the rocks or running her ashore, has handled her recklessly or without judgment, may be tried for endangering or hazarding his charge.

The R.T.C. was certainly hazarded. That it escaped shipwreck was primarily due to the good seamanship of a few men, among whom were Lord Sankey, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, and, at a later stage, Lord Reading; and to the adroitness of the Prime Minister in the last week of discussion.

It would be as well to remind ourselves of the circumstances of this historic Conference. The delegates from

India were not elected but were nominated by the Viceroy. Of the principal parties the members of the Chamber of Princes and the Ministers from other States were certainly representative. The Moslems and Sikhs were fairly representative; the Hindus speaking for the great political religious organization of the Mahesabha could speak for that body and the Indian Liberals could speak for their Party. But the Congress Party was not represented, as all negotiations for the attendance of its spokesmen failed.

Yet the Hindus from British India could have voiced the aspirations of a majority of their co-religionists, if they had been backed up from the beginning, and if different tactics had been pursued by the British Government in London and India.

The British die-hards in both countries were prepared to die in two ditches. The first was the supposed opposition of the Order of Princes to Indian self-government and to Federalism. The second ditch was the hostility between Hindus and Moslems.

Certain of the Delegates nominated were expected to assist in digging these ditches. And it was not for nothing that Governors from India and other Senior Civil Servants, including leading members of the Political Service, accompanied the Delegations.

The first line of die-hard fortifications was demolished by the Princes.

To the unconcealed amazement of the India Office and the Indian Civil Service, the Princes declared for Federalism with British India: and this without any guarantees on the, to them and their subjects, all important question of Paramountcy. Paramountcy, as defined by the Butler Committee on the Indian States and by Lord Reading when Viceroy, means that there are no rights for the States, no obligations on the Paramount power. The only proviso made by the

Princes was that India should remain within the British Empire.

This almost quixotic generosity on the part of the Rulers, who have most to lose if things go wrong, deserves recognition, and it is to be hoped that they, in their turn, will be treated with generosity and trust during the years immediately ahead.

The second line of die-hard fortifications could have been demolished by the British Indian Delegates in their turn. It was for the Hindus to satisfy the Moslem minority and for the Moslems, in their turn, to satisfy the small but important Sikh minority (3,000,000) in the Punjab, a key province politically.

With agreement between these three communities, and with the Princes ready for Federalism, no British Government would or could have refused anything in reason to India.

By failing to agree before even leaving India, and again by failing to agree in London before the Conference began its sittings, the spokesmen of these three Communities hazarded the Conference.

The next error I will refer to was the lack of preparation for the Conference by the British Government.

The R.T.C. actually overlapped with the Imperial Conference. This could have been avoided by calling the R.T.C. together in the summer of 1930. Several of the most important British Labour Delegates were members of both Conferences, and all were burdened with other political work of absorbing interest and importance, and with urgent administrative duties. It was understood that the Lord Sankey was to preside over the R.T.C. In the event, the Prime Minister became a delegate and presided himself. The Foreign Secretary, a very skilful negotiator, is a member of the Cabinet Unemployment Committee. The Preparatory Commission on Disarmament of the League of Nations



was being wound up at Geneva, while the R.T.C. was sitting in London, and Mr. Henderson had to leave for a very important Council Meeting of the League of Nations before the R.T.C. finished.

Mr. Thomas, the Dominions Secretary, who was very popular with all the Delegates, was heavily engaged in the Imperial Conference even after the R.T.C. had begun, and was also closely concerned with Unemployment.

The only "outside" Minister co-opted for the work was the Postmaster-General, the biggest employer of labour in the country.

The Conservative and Liberal Parties each nominated four members. There was a strong case for a Minority Government inviting the help of the other two parties in tackling so vitally important and difficult an Imperial problem; especially as the Indian Delegation was supposed to represent all sections of Indian opinion.

But no meeting of the British Delegates was held before the Conference began.

The British Labour Government Delegates had not even met as a delegation prior to the Conference.

Opened by H.M. the King-Emperor on November 12th, 1930, the first Preliminary Session commenced the Conference in earnest, four days later. This Session lasted a week, and produced a great change in the atmosphere, and a radical alteration in public opinion both in Britain and India. Not only did the States representatives declare for immediate Federation, but every section of the Delegates from India—Hindus Moslems, Sikhs, Christians, Indian Labour, Anglo Indians, Europeans—declared for responsible self-government at the centre, subject to certain temporary safeguards. The effect on Conservative and Liberal opinion was such that what was agreed to in January could have been proclaimed in November.

If, at the end of this week of historic pronouncements, the Imperial Parliament had been invited to support the Government in framing a Constitution for India on those lines, there would have been a large and favourable majority in both Houses.

The opportunity was missed for the time being.

Instead, committees and sub-committees were set up, an attempt made to settle in weeks the details of a constitution that required months of intensive work, and for which the collaboration of the spokesmen of at least the moderate section of the Congress was essential. Suspicions were aroused in India, dissensions encouraged among the spokesmen of the Indian communities in London, and the die-hards stimulated once more.

So was the R.T.C. hazarded on the British side.

During that week of plenary speech the representatives of H.M. Government in Great Britain were invited again and again to declare their intentions. Had the Conference been summoned to work out a plan of Dominion self-government for India? Was responsibility to be granted to the Central Government?

No reply was given to these vitally important questions for some weeks. In the meantime repressive measures in India were intensified, the boycott was strengthened, more persons were jailed, until the numbers reached over 60,000, and the symptoms of violence increased in what had, on the whole, been a non-violent movement of passive resistance.

And all the time the Delegates from British India and Indian India waited in London for the disclosure of the Government's policy.

If caution forbade the bold stroke of statesmanship and leadership implied in facing Parliament and seeking authority to settle the Indian question on the only lines at present possible, at least assurances could have been given that the Labour Party itself was favourable to

India attaining Dominion status at the earliest possible moment. In the last resort India may have to be made a Party question, just as Irish Home Rule was made a Party question. Fortunately the Conservative leaders are trying their best to avoid this.

In the Labour Party's deliberate statement of policy in "Labour and the Nation" before the last General Election, Dominion Home Rule for India was declared to be the aim of the Party.

The people of India would then have been made aware that, in the light of recent happening, one great Party in British political life was prepared to advocate Indian self-government not only in Parliament but if necessary at a General Election with the voters of Great Britain as the ultimate judges.

For let there be no mistake about what follows.

Those who came 7,000 miles from India to attend the Round Table Conference are almost our last friends in the sub-continent, as I have endeavoured to show in earlier pages. Politically awakened India is divided into two groups; those who mean to struggle for complete independence and those who still desire their country to remain within the Empire as a self-governing Dominion.

In the event, no declaration was then invited from Parliament, nor made as to the intentions of the British Government.

The committees and sub-committees made a valiant attempt to "work out the details". This was impossible in the time, and in any case was futile until the main outlines of the structure were known, and, most important of all, until it was known whether that section of politically awakened India not represented at the R.T.C. would be prepared to accept and work the new Reforms.

The vitally important sub-committee on Defence and the Army did not begin its labours until January 7th with the whole Conference due to end on January 19th!

The delays and the uncertainties acted as a wind blowing the embers of communal hostilities into flames. As the fire burnt up, so the attitude of the Conservatives and certain of the Liberals hardened. Any die-hard who could blow on the flames in the Press, or Conference, or by public utterance, rushed in to do so.

But if the fires of communal dissension warmed the hearts of the die-hards, they chilled the faith and enthusiasm of the British public generally. Admirably stage-managed, the Round Table Conference adjourned in a blaze of publicity, spotlights, loudspeakers and concealed bands of Grenadiers playing Auld Lang Syne. There was a Turkish bath of emotion. But the transient optimism did not extend far beyond the walls of St. James's Palace.

The Hindu-Moslem differences will be solved in India and the mass of the people brought to believe at last in the sincerity of the British nation's offer of partnership with the self-governing India of to-morrow.

But there is a rough road to travel, and all the courage and nerve and faith of statesmen in both countries will be tested to the uttermost in the difficult months ahead.

I believe that a firm and earlier offer of Dominion self-government subject to certain limited safeguards would have had the effect of bringing agreement between the Hindus and the two great minorities of Moslems and Sikhs. As matters have turned out, the British Government may have to accept the invitation of the Hindu Mahasabha to arbitrate or to impose a settlement, probably on the lines of the Government of India's despatch.

Lord Sankey would probably have been accepted as an arbitrator; while in conjunction with *Mahatma* Gandhi his mediation would have been welcomed by nearly all Indians.

However, the Federal Committee did useful service. It was here that Lord Reading finally came into the

open, and with his authority as the ex-Viceroy most recently in India and a Liberal Elder Statesman, declared his conversion to the desirability and possibility of setting up a responsible Central Government in a Federal India.

This will ensure a majority both in Parliament and the constituencies for the very minimum that India, as a whole, will accept.

*Anything* that the Delegates brought home to India from the R.T.C. would be fiercely attacked by the extremist element in the Congress Party. But provided it is something that the Delegates themselves believe in their hearts to be near the maximum that India can obtain at this stage, there are enough men and women of goodwill in India to work the new Reforms and to make a success of them.

Provincial autonomy is assured. Not even a Conservative Government in Great Britain could offer less.

The most vulnerable points of attack by their opponents will be the "safeguards" in the Central Government. Until the Army is Indianised, Defence must be a reserved subject. With Defence goes foreign relations. There is little controversy here, *so long as it is made evident that we really do mean to help on Indianisation in earnest.* Our treatment of the Army question will be the acid test in India of our sincerity. This treatment will depend chiefly on the conduct of future Secretaries of State for India in Whitehall, and of the Viceroy and future Viceroys in Delhi.

They will need to be men of determination, energy and courage. There will be many lions in brass-hats in the path. The references on the Army Sub-Committee to the need of the assent of the Committee of Imperial Defence were ominous. For on this reactionary committee the Field-Marshal and Admirals are strongly placed, and in a position to work much mischief, as all who know what goes on behind the scenes of Government in Britain are well aware.

The battle of the safeguards will, however, rage most violently over Finance. Lord Reading has tried to assure India that his proposals are in India's interests and not in Britain's. This is of the utmost importance. The power over the purse is essential to self-government. While the new Indian democracy finds its feet, no doubt some reserve powers at the disposal of the Viceroy are necessary; but surely Indian leaders are as capable in financial matters as, say, the politicians of the South American Republics. And in those Republics, public credit is high. Guarantees for the payment of salaries, pensions and the service of India's public debt are agreed upon.

But I met no Indian in India who did not complain of past manipulations of India's finance and currency to the supposed advantage of Britain. The best known and most often quoted case is the Rupee, stabilised at one shilling and sixpence instead of one shilling and fourpence. It is argued that this high valuation has hit agriculture, the principal industry in India, hard. It is to be hoped that the new Central Government in India will have sufficient influence over its own Central Bank to be able to return to a one and fourpenny or one and fivepenny rupee if the desirability and advantage of this course of action can be proved.

For the rest, the establishment of a Supreme Court has been agreed to in principle. This was inevitable with a Federal System.

The franchise has been fixed, in supposition, at a rather high qualification—25 per cent. From the point of view of India's cultivators and labourers, this is too restricted. It will mean an agrarian and economic, instead of a political, struggle in the future. There is no real difficulty in enfranchising the villagers, especially under some system of indirect election. The village *Panchayet* or Council of five head men (patels) has been

in operation in India for many centuries. The average village consists of 400 to 500 souls.

The *Panchayet* has a sacred sanction and prestige, all its own. It will be sound policy in the future to enfranchise the villages through the patels. A high property qualification will mean the enfranchisement of the landowners and money lenders only in many parts of British India.

The scene of negotiations will now shift to India. Our friends of the R.T.C. have the task of winning over their politically awakened fellow-countrymen not represented at St. James's Palace.

It is no exaggeration to say that without the consent and agreement of *Mahatma* Gandhi, no proposals for an Indian Constitution will have much chance of acceptance by the awakening masses. We should strengthen the hands of the returning Delegates in every way possible. I suggest the following immediate steps:

- (1) Give the Indian Leaders who are co-operating with us in the Government of India an effective control of, and responsibility for, Policy at once, and even before the new Constitution can be brought into operation. The Viceroy can consult with these Leaders and act on their advice under his present powers. Appoint Indians to the next vacant Governorships.
- (2) Amnesty political prisoners not found guilty of acts of violence, and wind up the farcical eighteen months' proceedings of the Meerut trial.\*
- (3) Proceed at once, without a day's delay, with the establishment of military training colleges in India, and admit suitable Indian officers to the Staff College at Quetta forthwith.

\* The release of a handful of leaders is unlikely to improve matters by itself. Gandhi, on leaving prison, made precisely the same demands as he made during conversations I had with him last year before his first salt-making march.

And we must understand that things will never be the same in India now that the Round Table Conference has been held. A deep impression, despite mishandling and hazarding, has been made on British and Indian public opinion. Indian politicians, including two able and charming women, have debated on equal terms with the political leaders of Great Britain, including distinguished ornaments of the British legal profession. Two of the British political parties, one of them responsible for the government of the country, have declared for a Central Government in India responsible to two elected Federal Chambers, and with autonomy for the Provinces.

The Conservative Delegates also assented, subject to being satisfied as to safeguards, details, and the settling of the Communal difficulties. They were supported by the majority of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons.

There can be no putting back of clocks after this. The die-hards may die in their last ditch of Communal hostility. But their last fight will not bring them victory. The future lies with the Youth of India. They are creating one-fifth of the population of the world into one Nation and one People.

And who can set boundaries to the march of a People?





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